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Glen A. Pierce

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Season's
Greetings



IN his red, footed pajamas, Jonathan crawled in among the pile of presents under the Christmas tree. He turned, sat down and looked out through the strands of tinsel. Then he reached up and fingered one of the shiny bulbs.

I watched and wondered. Sitting there among the presents, my seven-month-old son seemed to belong. He was, to us, a gift from God.

My mind travelled back to that first Christmas in Bethlehem and God's gift of his only son. Jesus came not as a full grown man, but as a child. He lay in a manger, vulnerable and dependent.

It occurred to me that God's gift included not *only* his Son, but also an example for us to follow in our relationship with him. Jesus said, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Luke 18:17 RSV).

Christmas, then, can be a time not only to rejoice in the birth of the Christ child, it can be a special season to study the little ones about us. Through them we can freshly discover the characteristics our Father desires to see in us.

Here are seven qualities of child-likeness I have observed in the early years of my four children. I pass these along as "starter blocks" to get you going in your own adventure of observing children at Christmas.

Dependent. A child is unable to care for himself. He must rely on adults for protection, for provision, and for instruction. Mom or dad must wash him, dress him, and care for his hurts. He is vulnerable, powerless. He may even need help opening his present.

We please God when we come to him in the spirit of dependence, looking to him for his fatherly care.

Transparent. We can see right through a child. If she is happy, it shows. If anger is there, we see it. Whatever is going on in that little head, the face tells the story.

We adults tend to hide our feelings. We hide behind our masks. But children are wonderfully unpretentious. They are uncomplicated, obvious.

God delights in our honesty. He



Like a child

by G. Roger Schoenhals

wants us to be open with ourselves, with one another, and with him. Children, at Christmas, can remind us to be more transparent.

Innocent. A child is unwise in the ways of the world. He is unsophisticated, gullible, naive. He has not experienced the range and frequency of deceitful deeds. Though he is a sinner by birth, he is yet innocent in many ways.

God wants us to be as children in this sordid world. We are to blush in the face of immorality, and run from the presence of evil. We are to be

"blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15 RSV).

Wide-eyed. Sometimes it's more fascinating to watch the face of a child looking at a sunset, than to see the sky itself; or to study a child as she watches the lights blink on the tree. Children have that marvelous capacity to gape and gasp. They "ooooo" and "ahhhhh" with ease.

Too often we adults take God and his world for granted. We reveal the loss of simple astonishment, the ab-

sence of amazement. We pray to the God of the universe as if he were an old college friend. We look at the star spattered sky and yawn.

God wants us to say, "WOW!"

Teachable. A child is like a sponge. She soaks up whatever her adult leaders say and do. She is impressionable, moldable, pliable. She has not reached the point of knowing more than mom or dad. She seeks answers with annoying frequency: "Why this? Why that? Why? Why? Why?"

God is not put off by our questions. Rather, God desires to teach us and to guide us. He tells us: ask, seek, knock.

Eager. Young children are eager beavers. They are ready to go with us anywhere, anytime. They want to be where the action is. They are eager to please. They are enthusiastic. They can't wait until Christmas morning to open the presents.

God likes that kind of responsiveness. He wants us to stand on our tiptoes, zealous to learn his will, eager to do it.

Trusting. Children display simple faith. They readily accept whatever mom or dad say. They leap into space, knowing the outstretched arms will save them. Without wavering, without wondering, they believe. They accept our stories about Santa Claus coming down the chimney—or the truth about Jesus in the manger.

The Bible calls us to "trust in the Lord with all your heart" (Prov. 3:5a RSV). Repeatedly we are exhorted to exercise our faith; to believe. Children can teach us how.

Christmas is coming, and children will be in the midst of it all. Through some of their words and ways we can perceive what God wants of us. And, in turn, we can offer to our Father the gift of a childlike heart. We can affirm our dependence on God, our transparency before him, our innocence in the world, our wide-eyed wonder at his glory, our openness to his guidance, our eagerness to serve him, and our simple faith in his Word.

Roger Schoenhals is from Seattle, Wash.

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SHE was, as I recall, always out of step. Life marched one way and she went the other. The world said something was purple, and she saw an array of lavender and mauve and violet, with a kiss of silver. Or while everybody laughed and played, she preferred to sit alone in the twilight thinking about words or songs or simply closing her eyes and feeling things—somewhere deep inside. She never really fit. She never really cared.

Until later. It was sometime around 16 . . . or maybe 15. Suddenly there were boys and everything seemed to matter that had to do with them. She looked up one day and they all had gotten kind of tall and muscular. And once in a while one smiled and looked at her a little funny and it sent a creepy feeling up her spine. She didn't like it. Not at all.

So she pulled a puffy, soft blanket around her life that guarded her lavender visions. She wrapped her mind in books and dreams and melodies. But it never was quite the same. One of these days, she thought, someone will break through and I won't be safe anymore. And, as I recall, that's exactly what happened.

Mark was the one. He sort of started popping up one day, then the next, and the next. He started poking around, a question here, a smile there. Every time, she looked the other way. But he just kept trying, picking up her lunch tray the minute she finished eating, or finding out the combination of her locker and having it open for her before she could get to it. He had this amazing way of grinning back over his shoulder. Never a word, just this twinkle of a smile. She never knew what to say, so she didn't say anything at all.

Not until Christmas time. It was the season she hated the most, mainly because she liked it and couldn't figure out why. Things she couldn't understand bothered her a lot. Christmas and Mark. They were enough to make a girl utterly mis-

erable. Both of them pulled away her protection. Somehow they made her feel very small and very big at the same time. She felt like broken glass or a very little bug in a great big spider web.

A "dear diary" didn't help. Neither did a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle, or a walk in the snow, or a marathon painting session on her semester project. None of the things from her childhood worked anymore. The uneasiness turned from gray to black. She wanted to go hide—anywhere—from these intruders that wouldn't go away.

"That's the best painting I've ever seen. How do you do that?" There he was again, in art class. "Hello . . . hello? Anyone home?" he joked.

Please go away, she thought. I just don't know what to say to you. But somehow she managed half a smile. That was all he needed. The flood gate opened. Before she could lift a finger to stem the tide, Mark had picked up her books and was sauntering down the hall with her, chattering happily like a 33 rpm record

set on 45. He showed up again at the 3:00 bell and walked with her all the way to the second-to-the-last corner from home.

"Bye, Mark," she mustered, but he wasn't finished yet.

"You have any plans for Christmas Eve? Wanta come over?" he blurted.

Her entire being fell into a pit a mile deep. She couldn't, just couldn't. But she heard her mouth say "sure." He turned on his heel and it seemed to her his feet hardly touched the ground until he was out of sight. Snow fell gently against her cheeks, or was the dampness a tear?

Her family always opened presents on Christmas day. Christmas meant TV cartoon specials and football games, dinner with grandma, and then two boring weeks off of school. So Christmas Eve was open, no problem. She got a smirk from her younger brother and raised eyebrows from her mom and dad when she asked if she could go to Mark's, but no one said much. She couldn't eat a thing all the next day.



*Lynn Walker, a freelance writer,
is from St. Louis, Mo.*

At first, Mark was quiet as they walked toward his white frame house. Maybe he sensed her shyness, but that never had stopped him before. She wondered if he regretted asking her now. Maybe he felt trapped. What would they do? Each step toward the house seemed longer and heavier. And yet, Mark seemed to have a certain peace, a kind of glow.

The night was still and dark. But from each window shone a single white candle that cut through the crackling cold of the night. Inside, she was greeted by Mark's mother, and an offer of popcorn and warm punch. Two littler children darted past them, laughing their way into the room where the tree was lighted softly next to a low-burning fireplace. Mark's dad sat engrossed in a book, perhaps a Bible, and said hello, peering warmly at her over his half glasses.

There was something different here, she thought. And she started to relax just a little. Carols from a tape player accompanied a game of Uno or two. Time went fast. In a little while, Mark's dad signalled the hour had come for presents. The whole family gathered close and suddenly she felt very out of place. She hadn't brought a gift for Mark. Yet in his hand was a small box beautifully wrapped, but obviously by a masculine hand.

At least she knew the songs that Mark's mom led from the piano.

Then his dad opened the book on his lap and started to read. At first, the words seemed unfamiliar, the meaning strange. Was this the Christmas story? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . . The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . ."

Her mind swirled in an attempt to understand what was being read. "The Word" . . . "without him nothing made"? Her stomach tightened and her face flushed with confusion. Mark's dad flipped over to another section and began to read again. Now the words had a more familiar ring. "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. Her mother Mary. . . ." Jesus! The first part was about Jesus.

"O.K. It's time for presents!" The stillness broke into excited frenzy as the younger children plunged toward the gifts. Mark turned toward her, still clutching the small box.

"Merry Christmas," he said, extending it toward her. Then, with some difficulty, he began, "I wanted you to come tonight because you have always reminded me of Christmas."

She knew it wasn't a long pause, but it felt like a hundred years. Why—of all people—would she, so shy and a nothing to anybody, remind him of Christmas? Through her stunned fog, she heard him continue.

"God has made you a very creative person. You do and see things differently from other people. You bring beauty to the world through your painting and you can put your thoughts on paper when all the other kids are acting silly or stupid."

Her cheeks burned with embarrassment and pleasure. "But I don't have a present for you," she blurted.

He hesitated, searching for words. Her fingers fumbled with the wrappings. There emerged a tiny, yet exquisite painting of a manger scene. Mark continued, "I don't know how else to explain it. *You* are the present. You remind me every time I see you of God's love and his creativity. You're different. You surprise people—the way God did at Christmas. The Savior was supposed to be a king. But God sent a baby." Mark's voice trailed off as if he felt his words were failing. But she raised her eyes to him with such a look of understanding that he broke out in a wide grin.

"Thank you," she said. "You'll never know how much this means to me."

And he never fully did. Teenage friendships have a way of drifting apart in light of important choices like college and future. But she never forgot his courage in opening up a door of love for her that seemed to have been shut all her life. She never forgot that first spark of real truth and beauty that eventually made everything else creative in her world make sense.

And even now, when I'm tempted to pull that snug, protective blanket around me, I recall that Mark was God in the flesh for me that night so I could start to understand Jesus. God came creatively and personally to me that Christmas Eve. He still does, over and over again. ■

The gift

by Lynn Walker



Denying the incarnation

by John E. Zercher

These are times that try men's souls. These times also test men's theology.

Overwhelmed by bad news and forecasts of worse, Christians are tempted to write off the world and relate in ways which are less than biblical.

The temptation is to escape. So evil are the times that we feel our spiritual survival is threatened. So, in seeking isolation and withdrawal, we attempt to save our faith and live obediently.

This escape takes varied forms. It may express itself in an over emphasis upon the inner life—a pietism that sees experience as an end in itself. Experience becomes sort of a security blanket rather than the well-spring for ministry and service. We, like Peter, prefer the mountain top to the plain below where the epileptic boy and his father wait.

This escape sometimes take more visible form of withdrawal. Community and society's institutions are written off and Christians create their own structures by which to function. Survival becomes the consuming concern. The posture is one of defense. We isolate ourselves from the community and our neighbors.

John Zercher was editor of the Visitor from 1967 until his death in 1979. This article is from the December 25, 1975 issue.

An inordinate interest in things mysterious and in future events is another means of escaping the reality of the times. The Bible becomes a holy and fascinating book of clues to the future rather than a guide for life and practice in the now.

It will be clearly observed that an emphasis upon the inner life is essential to spiritual well being. It may well be pointed out that the church, as a community, is comparable only to the home in its closeness and caring. We all need that hope which comes when we know that the God of the present is also the God of the future.

But my observation is that these have become in too many cases escapes from life rather than sources of strength.

Christmas says something about this temptation. The Incarnation means that into a world of brutality and oppression, of selfishness and bigotry God came. He came not in isolation but in identity. The Son took "the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death . . ." (Philippians 2:15).

His arena was the roads and the towns and the marketplace. There is where he found the lepers and the blind. There he found Zacchaeus

and Matthew. He confronted the religious and the powerful. He was available to the poor, the outcast, and the honest seeker.

He had the close community of the twelve. From it he and they drew strength and the disciples learned of him. But these were not wandering holy men. They were ministers in word and deed announcing the New Kingdom which had come. There were nights of prayer—followed by days of teaching and ministry.

The Incarnation becomes our pattern for Christian living. As God was in Christ, so Christ is in his church—his body. As he was in this world, so are we to be. We who believe in the Incarnation as doctrine need to take care that we do not deny it in life.

The dangers of involvement are real. We can compromise principle for the sake of expediency. We can allow our values to become blurred so that society's values become ours. We can become so like the world that we have neither a message to speak nor a position from which to speak.

The dangers of withdrawal are just as real. And Jesus warned against this by stating clearly that he who would save his life will lose it, but he who loses it for the sake of Christ and the kingdom will find it.

The season is upon us—and in some shopping malls and stores, the season began coming upon us in late September already. The times have changed drastically since the day nearly 2,000 years ago when the Bethlehem narrative unfolded. But I wonder if the human heart has changed much.

Consider the plight of the innkeeper, for instance. We tend to think of him as the bad guy in the account of Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wisemen—they all recognized the importance of the event. They all realized the significance of the arrival of the babe, and its impact on the ages to come. But the innkeeper, having turned away that tired couple from Nazareth, missed his opportunity to provide the birthplace of the greatest figure ever to walk on the face of this earth.

Do you think he ever regretted that moment? If he knew then what we know now about this annual holiday, and if he was like most of us are, I think he likely did. . . .

"Honey, when are you going to snap out of it?" asked the poor man's wife. "It's been 40 years since you turned away Mary and Joseph. You've got to quit crying about it. The kids are developing a complex."

"I can't (sob) help it. I had the chance of a lifetime. It was the greatest opportunity a person could ever dream of having. Jesus, the Son of God, could have been born in my lowly inn. And (sob) I blew it!"

A Christmas regret

by Don Ratzlaff



"Come now, Amos, don't be so hard on yourself. Remember, hundreds of people swarmed on Bethlehem that night. They needed lodging too. The inn was full. There was nothing you could have done."

"There must have been something. Maybe I should have thrown out that obnoxious Samaritan couple in 2-C, or maybe cleared out that hardware convention on the third floor. Instead, I turned away Mary and Joseph (sob, sob) and the child had to be born in a barn!"

"Please quit crying, dear. There was no way you could have known who Mary and Joseph really were. I mean, how could you have possibly perceived she was about to give birth to Messiah, the Christ child, the Savior of the world, Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace?"

"Wait a minute. How many kids did she have that night? I thought there was only the one."

"There was only one, silly. But Jesus became all those things to any and all who placed their faith in him. But you couldn't have known that then. God won't hold it against you for turning away his only begotten Son. He can't blame you for missing the spiritual significance of that night."

The old innkeeper looked up, puzzled. "God? Spiritual significance? What on earth are you talking about, Bertha?"

**You don't really
think anyone
would actually try
to make a buck
off something so
spiritually precious
as Christ's birth,
do you?**

"Why, isn't that why you've been so distraught all these years? Isn't it because you missed the arrival of God's glorious gift of life into this dark and dying world?"

"Well, I can't say the thought ever occurred to me. I was just thinking of the *real* opportunity we threw away."

"Real opportunity?"

"Can you imagine what a goldmine we had here? We'd have been set for life."

"What are you talking about, Amos?"

"Don't you see? The Son of God could have been born in our inn. Imagine what that would have done for business! I can see it now . . . a big marquee outside the inn, a flashing neon sign: *Jesus was born here!* or *Mary and Joseph slept here!* Think of it—what Holy Land tour group would dare pass us by? We'd be packed out every night of the

year. Then there's always the souvenir shop in the lobby. . . ."

"Dear, I don't think—"

"Oh, I had big plans. We could have made his birthday a special day for everyone—maybe decorate some trees, wire-up lots of street decorations, throw parties galore! And maybe we could have created some commercial gimmick—like maybe having some old man dress up in a red suit and pass out presents to all the children. Think of the economic boom for the town! Stores could stock up a couple of months early, stay open late hours, and sell truckloads of merchandise to badgered parents. The Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce would love it!"

"But Amos, aren't you forgetting the real significance of the event? You know, Jesus being born into a dark and dying—"

"Yes, yes, I remember all that. In fact, we could have named the holiday after him . . . like 'Jesus-Day' or 'Christ-mas'—something catchy like that. Who knows, maybe the idea would have caught on all over the world."

"Now, Amos. You've got a good imagination. But honestly now, you don't *really* think anyone would actually try to make a buck off something so spiritually precious as Christ's birth, do you?" ■

Don Ratzlaff is editor of The Christian Leader, Hillsboro, Kans.



Pontius' Puddle

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Lenora Stern makes a point while Glenn Ginder and Lester Fretz listen.

Council agenda: power and authority; mission statement

by Eugene Wingert

What agency of the Brethren in Christ Church has no budget, receives no funds, spends no money, makes no decisions, conducts no programs, has no chairman or secretary, is amenable to no one, and yet has one of the most crucial functions within the framework of the Church?

The name of this little publicized and little known group is the Council on Ministries and Mission. It is made up of the chief administrators from each general board, all the bishops, a representative of the Commission on Educational Institutions, and the chairpersons from each general board.

The council meets twice a year to provide a forum in which the long-range projections of the general boards can be discussed and coordinated. This is the setting where the diverse ministries of the church can work at being truly "cooperative."

During a recent meeting at Kenbrook Bible Camp, the council pursued two major topics. The first related to issues of power and authority in the church, and the second to the role of the Council on Ministries and Mission.

The issues that were identified and the resolutions that were offered are summarized below. No official actions were taken relating to these issues at the meetings. Consequently, the form of the articles and the way the issues are summarized are the work of the author, an observer at the meetings. However, the points that are made in the articles are points that were made in the meeting and reflect the dialogue that occurred.

Power and authority

We Brethren in Christ have problems with authority. We are generally uncomfortable with authority—particularly authority that is focused "at the top."

Eugene Wingert is director of Kenbrook Bible Camp, near Lebanon, Pa.



Strong leadership is often suspect as power grabbing. We like to have things done at the "grass roots level" with lots of people—involvement and decision-making by consensus. We are somewhat anti-hierarchical and attempt to keep authority chains short—for more than just "stewardship" reasons.

We don't invest too much power in our leaders. As one participant expressed it, "We give titles, but not power." Often we don't give enough authority to get the job done. Leaders have to check things out with their group before making major decisions.

Our cautious attitude towards authority also makes it difficult to set vision. When vision is stated for us "at the top," we feel suspicious. We feel that vision needs to start at the grass roots and be owned at this level. No one should get too far out in front of the group.

Consequently, we find ourselves having difficulty in accomplishing things—especially accomplishing things quickly. We need to check with the folks back home, test out the ideas at the grass roots, consult the brothers and sisters, arrive at consensus before making up our minds. Sometimes we like it this way; the process builds unity and we all feel a part in it. Sometimes we become very frustrated, miss opportunities, nurture hostilities, and create divisions. People get hurt. Many times it is the people we ask to be our leaders, who try to do a job, but without enough authority to pull it off; sometimes it's those who are being led as they feel threatened by what they perceive as too much authority or left at loose ends by too little exercise of authority.

These concerns reflect our "brotherhood" understanding of the church throughout our denominational history. One suspects they also reflect certain values of American democracy (government by the people, etc.). However, tensions between too much authority and

not enough authority, and questions about the nature and exercise of authority exist in every institution where there is any authority. This is a dynamic, ongoing tension, a healthy and necessary one, so we are not unique or "sick" because we don't have all the issues resolved.

Nevertheless, we recognize the need to work at understanding this tension and keeping it creative within the framework of God's Word. We need to continually address the issues of authority in the church in biblical terms. It is not that the Word changes, but people change and the church changes and times change. For example, authority is perceived and exercised in one way when ministers are chosen from within the congregation and serve at their own expense with no formal training. Authority is perceived and exercised in a completely different way when seminary-trained ministers are "hired" from outside of the congregation. This is just one of many changes in our denominational pilgrimage that impact the way we look at authority. Another significant change is moving from being a group composed primarily of farmers to a highly diverse membership of people who experience all kinds of authority structures in their daily lives in the world.

How can these issues be addressed?

First of all, we need to affirm that we are a brotherhood. We are neither congregational nor hierarchical in our understanding of the church. We have a strong sense that we do not merely attend church, or belong to a denomination, or are a part of a regional conference, or exist at a particular level on some hierarchical ladder. Rather, we believe, and need to reaffirm that we belong to each other, that we are part of each other. As the Word declares, "You are members one of another."

Consequently, power must not be from the top down. Jesus in his own

words said, "Rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them. . . . Not so with you" (Mk. 10:42-43). The first part of this statement describes the hierarchy where the people at the top make the decisions, do what they want to do because they are the leaders.

Neither must we have the rule of the masses. Leadership in a brotherhood must not simply be a tool of the people to do what they want to have done. Democracy may function that way, but not the church. The last thing we want in the church is to have leaders who are merely people-pleasing politicians.

Authority in a brotherhood must be authority to serve. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. . . . For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:44-45).

What are some of the practical implications of understanding persons in authority as servants?

(1) We need to think "servant" every time we choose, call, install, and invest a person with authority. When we install a pastor, we install a servant. When we consecrate a bishop, we consecrate a servant. They are not being given some honor or being lifted up, they are being vested with the garb of a servant.

(2) If that is true, then we need to choose our "servants" carefully. They need to be men and women in whom dwell the Spirit of the Servant, who follow the Servant, who bear in their lives the marks of the Servant. There may be many other "qualifications" that will be considered along the way—administrative ability, skill in preaching, financial

skills, etc. But the qualification of demonstrated servanthood is essential, primary, and must outweigh all other merits.

(3) We need to empower our servants to do the job. That is, provide the necessary authority to act. This begins with a well-written job description that defines expectations for the servant and those being served. Vague, undefined expectations are the cause of a large percentage of authority struggles.

(4) We need to provide the resources for our servants to do the job. This includes the resources of finance, our prayers, our time, our talent, and our full cooperation. Sometimes it seems that we give an assignment to an individual or a board and then almost dare them to get any of our money or time or participation in accomplishing their task. Those whom we call, we must support with the resources they need.

(5) We need to trust our servants. Servants cannot function with authority unless there is trust on the part of those who call them to serve. We need to resist the temptation to keep a little bit of the power in our own hands because we don't quite trust someone else with it. When we give our servants a task to do, let's allow them to do it. Hold them accountable ("It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." 1 Cor. 4:2), but give them the freedom to go ahead and perform the task.

(6) We need to esteem our servants. It is impossible for those whom we call to serve the church to do the task they have been asked to do if we undermine their authority by careless talk, back-

stage whispering or less than noble thoughts in our own hearts. Contrary to the way we often think, anyone who is called to serve is in a vulnerable position. We think of them as "powerful," "competent," "immune to the hurts of life." This is not so. In our hearts and in our conversations we need to lift up our servants before others and hold them in esteem.

The role of the council

The council spent significant time examining its own present and potential role. This process is a necessary one given the newness of the council and the newness of our present structure and methods of funding our agencies. It is sometimes a frustrating process and frustrations were experienced and expressed in the meetings. But it is also an exciting process for an exciting group within the life of the church. Here is a body of church leaders, involved daily with all of the ministries of the General Conference, coming together to discuss and informally coordinate their work without the pressure of agenda, formal decisions, or the need to generate programs.

The primary way in which the council approached this task was by the exercise of writing a "mission statement." Several small groups each responded the questions of "Why," "What," "How," and "For whom." This exercise served to clarify the assigned roles of the council and to creatively explore potential scope of ministry for this unique group. While having no authority to redefine its own role, the work of the council at this meeting may form the basis for possible

The Convention Director, Paul Hostetler, states that it is very important to reserve any needed airline seats early in the new year. The reasons:

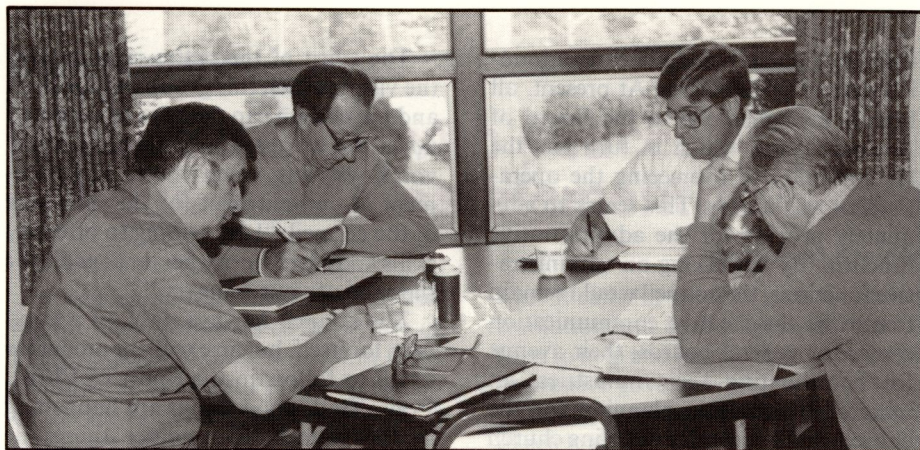
- With General Conference at a peak travel time, many flights will be sold out.
- If at all possible, the destination should be Ontario, Calif., because of less transportation time and cost from that airport to Azusa Pacific University. This will limit the number of flights available.
- Tickets obtained well in advance cost considerably less.

He advises those who know now that they will be going to General Conference and will be flying to purchase their tickets as soon as possible. After delegates are elected, those who are flying should get their seats very promptly.

The Convention Director has been in conversation with John Ebersole of MTS Travel in Ephrata, Pa. Since John

Important notice on air travel to General Conference

is well acquainted with the transportation needs relating to our General Conference, it will work well to have him schedule your trip. You can call him without charge: 1-800-642-8315.



Louis Cober, Eber Dourte, Ray Musser, and Harvey Sider take seriously their writing assignment.

future recommendations to the Board of Administration and the development of a needed function within the brotherhood.

Four board functions emerged from the exercise as appropriate roles for the council.

Communication. The council can serve as a forum to share the goals and programs of the various boards and for dialogue between boards. In this way, each may gain a reasonable grasp on the whole ministry of the church, perceive its own role in relation to the whole and appreciate, respect, support, and promote the whole in terms of its own specific assignment. This is cooperative ministry in action.

It can foster unity of vision and direction, be a "think tank" where members engage in mutual stimulation of creative thinking pertaining to the work of their various agencies and serve as a setting in which differences and misunderstandings can be worked out.

Having this kind of regular interaction among boards and denominational

leaders provides the necessary assurance to the church that each board is working in harmony with the whole, that boards are engaged in constructive communication with one another and working hard at cooperative ministry.

Another area of communication that was identified was communication with the Lord—prayer. The members of the council clearly recognized the need to spend quality time together in prayer when they gather, for the needs of the various ministries, our leaders, and the life of the church. Indeed a part of this meeting was a special time for prayer.

Coordination. It is envisioned that the council will serve as a coordinating agency for the various programs, activities, and promotional efforts of the boards in order to avoid possible duplication or conflicts in scheduling. This being so, agencies will be working in concert rather than in isolation.

Planning. This was perhaps the most discussed item of these meetings. Within the structure of the brotherhood, there does not exist at present any group that

has the responsibility of doing strategic planning for the denomination. The Board of Administration and the Board of Bishops each have their on-going administrative agenda and have not been assigned any special planning function by the General Conference. Likewise, each board does its own long-range planning, but these plans are not coordinated or linked to any central plan or vision for the brotherhood. The council could be the forum for creative planning and development of a vision for the future of the church which could then be passed on to the Board of Administration and the General Conference for adoption and implementation through the agencies of the church.

The addition of a strategic planning function would move the council beyond the realm of just dealing with what is going on now to the development of a broad vision for future ministry in our rapidly changing times. Furthermore, vision generated by the boards together would become a program that would have greater unity in its implementation. Our ministries would be cooperative in their conception and cooperative in their implementation.

Training. Special training opportunities could be included in the meetings of the council in areas of specialized skills such as promotion, conflict resolution, personnel management, or any of a number of skills that pertain to the workings of the various boards. In this

Evangelism and Missions Convention Information

The Board for Evangelism and Church Planting and the Board for World Missions are cooperatively holding a denomination-wide Evangelism and Missions Convention dur-

ing the two days prior to the 1988 General Conference (see page 28 for highlights of the convention). Registration for this convention must be done at the same time and on the same form as the General Conference registration. You will receive one bill for room, board, and registration for both the convention and General Conference. This bill should be completely paid with one check prior to the Evangelism and Missions Convention.

There is no registration fee for the Evangelism and Missions Convention. The cost for meals and rooms is the same per unit as that of General

Conference. For those lodging at Azusa Pacific University, a working cost figure (package plan) would be \$45.00. This includes two nights' lodging and six meals.

Registration will be on Thursday, June 30, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. The convention will convene at 2:00 p.m. Thursday and close Friday at 4:30 p.m.

Transportation to and from airports will be arranged by the General Conference staff. (Full details will appear in the January *Visitor*.) Children's programs for children through age 11 will be held during the convention.

way denominational leadership could benefit from the input of skilled Christian practitioners in a very cost-effective manner, be exposed to the same leadership at the same time, and have the opportunity to dialogue together on the given topic. All of this would be lost if individual board leaders just went off on their own to various seminars and conferences.

Another area that received considerable attention was, should there be an administrative role for the council? While opinions were offered on both sides, the stronger weight of opinion seemed to be

that the council should not carry administrative responsibilities. At present, all boards are amenable to the Board of Administration which in turn has the responsibility of overseeing the operations of the boards. This seems to adequately provide for the administrative function. By not taking on administrative functions, the council would remain free to be the creative communication center for general boards, their avenue for coordinating their ministries, an initiator of strategic planning for the church, and a means of enabling church leaders for more effective service.

The spirit of the entire meeting and the vision which this group has for itself and the church can perhaps be summed up in the words of one member, Peter von Keyserling, when he offered a statement of commitment for the members of the council: "I am willing to offer my skills and sacrifice my personal goals for the sake of your ministry."

The council has not only set a good path for itself, but an excellent model for us all to follow in the Spirit of Christ. Praise God, good things are happening in the council and greater things lie ahead. ■

The Moderator reflects on eight days of meetings

by Glenn A. Ginder

In the past I have lived with a General Conference moderator and on occasion I have worked with one, but now that I am one, somehow my awareness is intensified. One of the realities is "the meetings." In an earlier day, "going to the meeting" meant driving two or four miles to a revival in Manheim or a tent meeting at Elm. I could easily reminisce about that, but let me instead reflect on a more recent meeting.

Through the careful planning of the General Secretary and others, a series of General Conference board meetings came together in the following sequence in late September:

Tuesday

The Board of Bishops met with the Board for Evangelism and Church Planting to focus on pastors and new churches—their call, their internship training, and their support system in those first tough years.

Wednesday

The BOA Executive Committee worked with basic matters of church life including Bylaws updating and coordination of agencies and ministries.

Wednesday evening through Friday morning

The Board of Bishops met as the Pastoral Stationing Committee, and to care for issues ranging from moral/ethical concerns to program schedules and from the shape of the future to distribution of Brethren in Christ literature.

Glenn A. Ginder, bishop of the Midwest conference, is moderator of the Brethren in Christ Church for the 1986-88 biennium.

Friday

The Board of Bishops met with Allegheny Conference pastors and other congregational leaders at Clear Creek for a fellowship meal and an Accent Seminar that stirred our hearts and focused our attention on renewal.

Saturday

The Board for Stewardship met prior to the Cooperative Ministries budget hearings and reported (among other things) an offer to fund computerization of all General Conference agency and regional treasurers' offices to assist in prompt and accurate reporting.

The executive director and chairmen of all General Conference boards met with the Board for Stewardship in the budget hearings held at Messiah Village. In an atmosphere of open communication, commitment to faithful management of church funds, and respect for giving potential, these leaders gave themselves to the hard work of good budget planning. Reports from the stewardship office helped these planners to anticipate the joy of meeting the Cooperative Ministries budget for 1987.

The same group of executive directors and chairmen, joining with the Board of Bishops and the General Secretary as the Council on Ministries and Mission, enjoyed an evening of fellowship and inspiration before continuing their two-day session at Kenbrook.

Sunday afternoon to Monday evening

The 30-member Council on Ministries and Mission worshipped and worked together to strengthen the cohesiveness of the leadership team and to

clarify our sense of mission on behalf of the denomination. Resource people and group activities were helpful in understanding—

—the biblical model of power and authority of leaders

—the mission of the church

—the means and methods of communication in the constituency.

As we spent these valuable hours together in the inspiring atmosphere of the Kenbrook Retreat Center, it was apparent that God is at work. Vision was more clearly shaped and commitment to faithfully serve Christ and the church was expressed.

Tuesday

Jacob Engle Foundation membership (the JEF Board of Directors and the Board of Administration) met to work at clarifying the role and methods of operation for this unique ministry of the church. A committee will give careful thought to specific ways to increase the effectiveness of this ministry and report to the next JEF membership meeting in March.

All of the above is noteworthy because this series of meetings was certainly efficient in terms of travel and use of time. And it was *effective*. A great deal of long-range good was accomplished—and for one reason. Many people across the brotherhood join their leaders in praying daily for the Spirit's direction in the affairs of the church. That is what made the difference!

As moderator, I am keenly aware of the strength of this intercession—so evident, for example, in the meetings listed above. I urge others, many others, to invest some moments each day in prayer and to pray in Sunday school classes and church services in a spirit of openness and anticipation of Divine direction right through the 1988 General Conference. ■

Evangelical Visitor

Making peace with peace: a critique of NAE's statement on peace

by Robert Kreider

Speaking up for peace is embarrassing for many followers of the Prince of Peace, especially those who want to be identified as patriotic. Peacemakers may be the least of the blessed.

Some Christians view peace activists negatively saying, "They are soft on communism," or "They forced the United States to withdraw from a war in Vietnam it could have won."

But people yearn for peace. Mainline churches—Catholics, Methodists and Presbyterians—have recently drafted eloquent statements defining peace for Christians today. Among evangelists, often known for their militant patriotism, voices of peace are speaking more boldly.

Such evangelical apostles of peace as Jim Wallis, Ron Sider, and Myron Augsburger are capturing student interest on evangelical campuses. World known evangelist Billy Graham now speaks against nuclear warfare. In 1983 the Pasadena Conference on "The Church and Peacemaking in the Nuclear Age" drew more than a thousand evangelical participants.

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), through a task force, has prepared a document, *Guidelines—Peace, Freedom and Security Studies*, for distribution to 45,000 congregations in 78 denominations.

The study's findings

Peace is often coupled with freedom and justice, but pacifists rarely yoke it with national security. This 48-page NAE document calls for evangelical peace strategies with a new set of linkages that are informed by tough-minded political realism; supportive of American military security interest; vigorously critical of Soviet violations of human rights; confident that the new technology of Star Wars (Strategic Defense Initiative) can provide all countries protection from nuclear annihilation; and proud of American political values.

The guidelines statement challenges evangelicals to take peace out of the closet and discuss it. The document rejects the pessimistic view that war is inevitable and invites evangelicals to work for non-violent alternatives to

war. It calls for creative uses of conflict resolution and encourages vigorous efforts to help end human rights abuses by oppressive governments.

While *Guidelines* rejects the idolatry of celebrating the United States as God's first chosen among nations, they affirm confidence in the democratic processes for respectful debate among contending views. They acknowledge that evangelicals are diverse in political perspective and cannot be pressed into a uniform mold. Particularly welcome is the call for creative new patterns of conflict resolution and the search for nonviolent alternatives.

The late Reinhold Niebuhr, a liberal mainline Protestant theologian who was pleased that he had been liberated from naive pacifism to the maturity of political realism, would have liked these phrases from *Guidelines*: the complexity of moral dilemmas; wary of utopianism; avoidance of extremism and coalitions of passions; law and politics as the best means in a fallen world to bring peace, freedom and security; the great gap between things as they are and things as they ought to be.

All this sounds Niebuhrian, but is it the authentic language of the evangelical?

The authors of *Guidelines* are displeased with the fundamentalist radical right, whose errors they gently chide. The document questions the radical right's single-minded response to the Soviet threat, namely, enlarge American military capacity. It also disapproves of its low interest in effecting constructive change, its denial of possible change in the Soviet Union and its inadequate concern for the Third World. The authors are also uncomfortable with the radical right's surrender to the belief that war is in the nature of things and its excusing of human rights violations by the United States and its allies.

The document also lists many errors in the peace movement: lack of concern about the threat of totalitarianism; apologies for Castro and the Sandinistas; exaggerated fear of nuclear extinction; acquiescence to enemies; excessive optimism regarding human possibilities in a sinful world; and assumption that U.S. foreign policy is usually wrong. It

criticizes the peace movement for simplistic solutions; its obsessive readiness to condemn all powers equally; opposition only to American use of military power; its belief that weapons are the problem; and its placement of peace above all else. These and more indictments add up to a sobering case against workers for peace. A peacemaker in the Anabaptist tradition cries "unfair" to most of these charges.

As evangelicals and biblical peacemakers, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are grateful when other Christians issue statements of peace. Any group making a peace statement is called to draw deeply from the strengths of its particular heritage and identity. We would expect an evangelical body to base its statement on its distinctives.

One might hope for these qualities in an evangelical statement: earnestly biblical; winsomely evangelical; sensitive to the global faith community of mission-planted churches; a Christ-centeredness and Christ-pervasiveness; free from the seductions of a materialistic humanism; committed to the freedom to obey God without state assistance or hindrance; obedient to Christ's lordship in daily walk; and sharing and nurtured in the community of the faithful. But these qualities are not explicitly present.

Guidelines would be more persuasive if its message were distinctly set to evangelical music.

Document critique

As authors consider revisions in the document, they should be encouraged to ponder what distinctive gifts evangelicals bring to the ministry of reconciliation. This leads to several concerns.

First, although the perspective of "biblical realism" is often commended, the document in tone and argument is only marginally biblical. It does not seem to move and have its being in a biblical world view. One reads through the first third of the 48-page statement before coming to any biblical exposition, then only three pages.

The authors respond to difficult biblical passages or concepts with disclaimers of diversity of interpretations, or a flurry of questions, or an appeal to considerations of political realism or practicality.

Second, the statement fails to offer peace and reconciliation as good news set in a warm-hearted evangelical invitation: "Come all you who are heavy laden, brutalized, oppressed, victims of violence, hiding in terror . . . the Prince

of Peace invites you to a life of love and security in his peaceable kingdom." Peace may offend some among us who are well-fed, affluent, militant Americans, but it doesn't offend the hungry, the poor, and terrorized in the world.

Third, the statement fails to acknowledge that, although NAE constituents are Americans, they are also members of a faith community that extends to brothers and sisters in many lands who can help us seek the mind of Christ on public policy. One cannot write a statement on public policy without thinking of sisters in Christ in Sidon, Managua, and Novosibirsk, and brothers in Christ in Beijing, Addis Ababa, and the Transkei—many of them people we have come to love through overseas evangelism.

Fourth, one yearns for some reflection in this statement on the role of the congregation in the nurture of attitudes and discernment of action on perplexing national issues. Congregations ought to be more significant power centers for

evangelicals than Washington offices and sophisticated think tanks.

Other topics in *Guidelines* invite discussion: the relation between peace and justice; the search for a biblical theology of national security; the ultimate option of suffering and cross-bearing in encountering monstrous evil; the reconciliation between the claims of Christ's kingdom and the competing claims of 165 nation states. Those who love both God and their country may be uneasy with a statement that intimates that this particular nation legitimately transcends all else for attention, affection and obedience. *Guidelines* was written before the unraveling of the unsavory Iran-contra operation. A revised document might reflect an altered assessment of the rightness of American national policies.

Mennonites and Brethren in Christ should seriously study and respond to *Guidelines*. The study process provides for incorporation of suggestions from the churches. By triggering more ques-

tions than it resolves, *Guidelines* stimulates discussion. As part of the evangelical community, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ can bring unique resources to the study. Over the centuries our people have had varied experience with peacemaking (some successful and some not so successful), violations of human rights, security and insecurity. We also live close to spiritual kinsmen in Honduras and the Soviet Union, Chile and China, Germany and Cuba. We could share our understanding of their perspectives.

Mennonite Central Committee is prepared to offer groups resource materials that aid in the study of *Guidelines*. We can be grateful for this additional invitation to the churches to pursue the way of peace.

The NAE document is available for \$1 for a single copy from NAE, Box 28, Wheaton, IL 60189. (Write for quantity discounts.) For additional resource materials, write to MCC, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501. ■

Canadian evangelical conference on abortion found challenging

by William Janzen

Most of the 300 people who attended the early October "Symposium on Human Life," organized by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, found that it challenged them to a deeper understanding of the many dimensions of the abortion issue.

At the opening session, Dr. Susan Stanford moved the audience deeply as she told of having had an abortion herself, just as she was finishing her Ph.D. in psychology. The prolonged grief which followed eventually brought her to the brink of suicide, only to be helped by a Christian friend towards forgiveness and a new life in Christ.

Diane Marshall, an Anglican social worker in Toronto, was also well received as she explained that when a woman chooses an abortion it is often because she has received indications from her parents, her partner, her friends, her employer, or her society, that she will not be supported in bearing and raising the child. Many such women fear that

their future will be one of poverty and isolation.

Marshall had strong words for men. She referred to studies showing that white middle class males favor abortion more than any other social group. They want the pleasures of sexuality without the responsibilities. The responsibilities of fatherhood have been abandoned, she said. She called for education, for greater social and economic support for mothers. She also linked abortion to environmental problems and militarism, saying that the denial of life to the unborn is related to the denial of life on the planet.

Mona Lehman, a Baptist television producer, said that because of a movie she is now producing for the Alliance for Life, she is visiting homes for pregnant teenagers. In interviewing these girls she is finding that in most cases their desire to have a child is the result of a long search for love, for someone with whom to have a loving relationship. A surprisingly large proportion come from homes where there was violence, rather than love. She also described how pornography contributes in a major way to

such violence, particularly to the sexual abuse of women and girls.

Lawyer Robert Nadeau said in a workshop that the widespread acceptance of abortion was now leading to the acceptance of euthanasia and the killing of handicapped newborn infants. This trend, however, was not as widespread in Canada as in the U.S., partly because of Canadian Federal Law Reform Commission studies, he said.

Theologian John Webster said that justice comes from God, that people are called to form a covenant with God and with one another, and that the resulting community is to be a witness for the just order which God wants for the world. One aspect of such a just order, he said, would be protection for those on the margin, including the unborn.

Preachers Bernice Gerard and Allan Lewis made strong appeals for commitment and action. But Jake Epp, Minister for National Health and Welfare, in a brief appearance, cautioned against unrealistic expectations of government, while urging the church to do its part.

Approximately half of those present were women. Participants came from nearly all parts of Canada. The age spread was broad. There were Catholics among both the presenters and participants. Also identified were at least 25 people from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. ■

William Janzen is Director of the Mennonite Central Committee Canada Ottawa Office.

A story of God's care

by E. J. Swalm

Although the lifestyle of today in many respects is greatly different from that described in this incident, the basic principles of Christ-centered living have not changed.

The pastor and his wife were about to leave for a few days' visit to the Waterloo congregation 50 miles away. Since they would travel by horse and buggy, they prepared to leave before daylight. At family worship the father was especially moved to pray for family care to the point that the oldest son noticed it and wept. The family included two sons and two daughters, all teenagers.

Following the evening meal the children placed in the cellar the few slices of bread not eaten, to be returned again for breakfast. A few more slices were added at breakfast and they ate all they wanted, which seemed less than usual. In fact, they stopped at the very slices they had left the evening before. In putting the bread away again after daylight, they noticed some peculiar substance on the unused bread. Their suspicion caused them to isolate those slices until the parents returned.

On their return the parents took the bread to a professional analyst and they were told that each slice was covered with a deadly poison of which a couple of mouthfuls could have been fatal. The farm home had an outside doorway to the cellar which someone with a vicious motive knew about and used.

The venerable minister said he was never aware that he had an enemy and he never did discover the guilty person. However, from that time on, the father said he noticed that a certain neighbour acted noticeably strange with him, arousing suspicion.

This moving story is told trusting it will portray God's tender care for families who trust him. It is also hoped that it may help to rekindle the smoldering

fires of family devotions of our generation which burned so brightly on the altars of many godly homes of yesterday.

The family referred to is that of Mr. and Mrs. John Reichard who lived near Fordwich, Ontario. John Reichard was a Brethren in Christ pastor who supported himself by farming. He later became the bishop of what was known as the Waterloo-Howick District of the Brethren in Christ Church. This incident occurred in the late 1890s.

In Reichard's declining years, I was appointed as his non-resident successor. He related this unusual episode in 1930 while conversing with me in his home. I learned later that he shared this incident with others whom he regarded as close

friends, but he was never known to mention it from the pulpit.

After his death, I continued as non-resident leader of the district. I became well acquainted with the children as they all established fine Christian homes. They, like their parents, all reacted very calmly to the piercing thought of possible tragedy. They never were sure of the guilty person and no charge was ever laid.

The oldest son became a minister and pastored the local congregation. All the children remembered with deep feeling their father's fervent prayer that eventful morning. May God give us more prayerful homes. ■

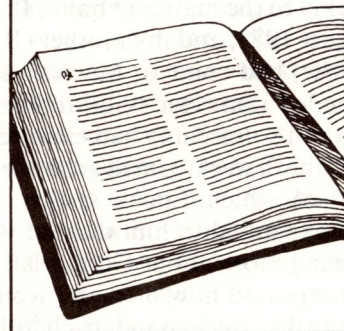
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Bishop emeritus E. J. Swalm lives in Dunroon, Ontario.

Bishop Enock Shamapani: Living in obedience

by Esther Spurrier

"What exactly is it that you are teaching the married couples during your meetings?" The question was Enock Shamapani's who, when greetings were completed and all were settled in the living room, came quickly to the matter at hand. It was August 1977, and my mother (Ruth Dourte) had come to Macha for an extended visit. Her skills and experience in counselling had enabled us to establish weekly small group meetings, of which Enock spoke. She now explained to him that we were learning more about God's plan for marriage and how men and women can better understand each other. "Christianity has been in Africa a long time, but the practice of Christian marriage is very difficult because of family pressures to follow traditions that are not Christian," Enock replied. "I want to learn how to have a truly Christian marriage." A long conversation ensued that very afternoon.

We knew and liked the young school teacher who lived nearby. In fact, he occasionally came over in the evening to borrow *Newsweek* magazine, talk politics, read stories to the children, or just drink coffee. Now we learned he was planning to marry one of the nurses at Macha Hospital, a girl who had been trained

at Macha and who was liked and respected by all who knew her.

Enock and Lastinah diligently worked to pattern their marriage after biblical standards despite certain traditions and peer pressures that opposed them. I remember dropping in to greet them one Christmas morning on the way to church. I found Enock showing exceptional consideration by ironing Lastinah's skirt in preparation for the Christmas service. Their home was home also for young relatives who were attending school at Macha, or older ones who had come to the hospital for treatment—they took traditional responsibility seriously. But they also planned times away when they could be alone to nurture their relationship.

During the year Lastinah was studying midwifery, Enock decided to apply through the church for further training in theology. He wanted to know more about God and his Word in order to more effectively serve and minister wherever he worked. From a list of applicants that included older men who had served the church much longer, it was unusual that Enock was chosen along with another young Christian and Bible student, Yotham Sikwangala. (Age and wisdom are more respected in that society than youth and strength.) But God was working his plan.

Enock would have liked to go to North America for his training, but the church was looking closer to home for places to train its leaders.

That year they decided to try two different schools in Kenya, Scott Theological College and Kenya Highlands. At Scott, Enock studied not only biblical and theological subjects, but he also learned a great deal about African church history, especially the East African revival movement. He witnessed the results of those revivals as he visited churches in Kenya. He was deeply moved by the example of the lives of young, educated Kenyans who had turned their backs on the earning potential of professional life in order to pastor rural congregations for which they received little material remuneration.

Enock's classmates at Scott recognized his leadership qualities and elected him chairman of the student council during his last year.

While in Kenya, the Shamapani's first child was born. Since Lastinah was not permitted to work as a nurse in Kenya, she was able to learn the value of participating fully in their daughter Sharon's growth and development—a rare opportunity for a Zambian professional woman. She did some writing for the school newsletter, and together she and Enock formed lasting friendships with students and faculty.

We were pleased when the national church leadership in Zambia agreed to a request from Macha church board that the Shamapanis become pastoral couple at Macha. It was assumed that both Enock and Lastinah would continue in their respective professions of teaching

Esther Spurrier, her husband John, and their children Becca and Matthew served 12 years at Macha Hospital. The family now lives in Dillsburg, PA.



Enock and Lastinah Shamapani and family.

and nursing in addition to their pastoral duties. But the lessons they had learned, the things they had experienced, and the modeling they had witnessed in Kenya were coming to fruition. Enock resigned from teaching in order to devote full time to his ministry. And when Lastinah finally returned to work some time after the birth of their second child, it was only part-time.

As young people in a large congregation that included a number of older leaders and elders, exercising leadership, especially when changes were needed, was sometimes difficult. But many hearts were touched by their gentle respectfulness, their humility, and their graciousness. Enock had a deep concern for a greater degree of personal evangelism outside the church and Christian nurture within. His sermons were powerful and true to Scripture. His use of illustrations from his own life enhanced their meaning for the hearers.

When they left Macha after two years to pastor the congregation in Lusaka, Zambia's capital city, we were sorry to see them leave. Yet we rejoiced that we had been privileged

to sit under their ministry for that short time. We were certain that the plan of God for them and for us would be to our good and his glory. God in faithfulness sent another fine pastoral couple, Rev. and Mrs. Robinson Mudenda, to Macha. And God continued to bless the ministry of the Shamapanis and give it a far-reaching significance. Enock's interest in Christian broadcasting was realized in opportunities to speak on radio devotional spots. And as evidence that Enock stood in favor with both God and man, his ordination service was carried on national television. Although city life was expensive, and sometimes frightening and difficult, God's grace clearly sustained and encouraged them.

At the 1986 General Conference, Enock was elected Conference Secretary. His integrity and effectiveness in ministry were apparent to all who knew him. The Lusaka congregation was eager to have the Shamapanis continue pastoring there. So they offered to pay travel expenses for Enock to spend one week each month in Choma doing committee and national church work.

The 1987 General Conference was

an important one. The first national bishop of the Zambia Brethren in Christ Church, William T. Silungwe, had said he would not be available for another term since he had already served two full terms as bishop. At first, the conference body was reluctant to accept his decision. But when they sensed that the Spirit of God was leading in this, they elected Enock to fill the vacancy.

This is a tremendous responsibility for so young a couple. And yet, as we have known the Shamapanis over the years as neighbors and co-workers, as friends and significant others, as pastor and wife, we feel confident that they have the qualifications, the gifts, and the commitment to do the job well.

It is not only the Zambian church that struggles with what it means to live in obedience to God. That is a tension for Christians all over the world. The Zambian church has faced times of great challenge and difficulty; it has also experienced times of great rejoicing. We know that the struggle continues. Wherever the Spirit of God is at work, so will the forces of evil be ready to take advantage of any vulnerability. Will you commit yourself to be faithful in prayer for Enock and Lastinah and their family? And will you pray with us for great spiritual victories for the church in Zambia? ■

God at work in our world

Relationships for Christ

Jay Smith—Senegal

We've been here over a year and are finally using the Wolof language in daily situations. The people in our community have been very encouraging, correcting our mistakes, yet not making us feel embarrassed.

Judy has quite a few relationships going with the neighborhood women who come to the house every day to chat and watch the children. We especially would like you to pray for three. *Ngalla*, who lives on our left, is quite industrious, speaks no French, and has a very loving heart. *Abibattu*, who lives on our right, is a daughter-in-law to her family, so must do all the cooking and washing and cleaning around the house, even carrying basins of water on her head a quarter mile though she is nine months pregnant. She is a hard woman, and

accepts her responsibility because society here demands it of her. (The mother and sister in the family traditionally "rule the roost.") And the third, *Soda*, is another hard woman with many responsibilities. She comes from our proprietor's family, a half-sister, typical in a Muslim setting where many men have more than one wife—up to four are allowed by religious law. She sews dresses for a living in addition to her household responsibilities.

Judy has a very difficult time getting these women to talk about their religious beliefs. They are caught up in the daily problems of life, and leave the religious matters to their husbands. They do not have the freedom to disagree or to even question Islam. Their place in the family, though important, has very little status; and so they follow meekly the path laid out for them by the Islamic code. Pray that Judy can find those pre-

cious times when the women can express what they really feel.

God is building the church

Bob and Carol Geiger—Colombia

God is doing some very special things in Bogota. In June Bob started a five week Bible study for men. At its completion, the men decided to continue, but with their wives. All seven men returned with their wives, and an additional three couples have joined. Three of these couples now attend Sunday service. We hope that more of them will begin coming soon.

A woman named Janet threw herself out a fifth-floor window, miraculously escaping death. I got there an hour and a half after the event and prayed with her mother for her healing and the arrival of the ambulance. She suffered nothing more than two fractured vertebrae and was actually walking the next day. She and her husband, Guillermo, are now in our couples group; and we are praying that they soon will give their hearts to Christ.

The Sunday morning group continues

Excited about World Christian Intercessors?

by Mim Stern

My husband Pete and I had just walked down the long church aisle to shake hands with people in the congregation as they left the sanctuary. Our presentation had been called "The Planting of the Lord in Mufulira."

One enthusiastic handshaker bubbled with excitement as she said she felt like she knew a lot of the people we talked about. She had kept up with our prayer letters and had prayed. According to 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, that lady's reward will be as great as the reward of the go-ers.

Most people tire of praying in generalities. Have *you* learned the

thrill of praying specifically and intelligently? The World Christian Intercessors (WCI) monthly prayer releases are set up to help you do just that.

During our years of missions service in Africa, we were recipients of many answers to prayer, so you can see why we're excited about the WCI program. To give the picture a little more color, I'd like to share some happenings in our church-planting experience in Mufulira, Zambia, which can only be attributed to answered prayer . . . your prayers.

We moved to Mufulira in November of 1983, not knowing anyone in that copper-mining town. We did have a list of names in our hands. These were of people who had come from the Choma area over the years to find employment in the copper mines. (Choma has been the Brethren in Christ headquarters in Zambia

since 1906.) Many of these people were technicians and specialists. Since this was the first effort to reach those long away from their roots, the Tonga people became the initial target group.

We began to search for them. Some, not surprisingly, had become affiliated with other denominations. Fine! They were hungry and needed food. Others, however, said they were waiting. These seemed to be very happy to be found and gave verbal assurances of their support. Bible studies began in homes, and after one month it was agreed to hold our first Sunday service. There were 35 present. The number grew as word spread, and we were thrilled and perhaps too elated . . . but not for long.

In a few months it became apparent that some of our group had become accustomed to lifestyles not befitting the depth of spiritual commitment necessary for leaders in an emerging church. Tardiness gave way to absenteeism. The truth hurt that the leadership potential was less than we thought. We were desperate!

Pete and Mim Stern recently retired from life-long missionary service in Africa. Their next adventure is to begin a ministry to international students in Philadelphia, Pa., in conjunction with Brethren in Christ World Missions.

Evangelical Visitor

to grow. We average about 28 people including children. That does not include the couples group or another 10 people who are faithful in attending the Thursday night Bible study, but who are not able to make it to Sunday morning service. So we have close to 60 people who are faithful in attending one of the weekly services. We praise God for the way he is raising up his church.

Now we are looking for an apartment to rent where we can handle about 50 adults and have space for children in Sunday school. Pray for this. Also pray with us as we begin to officially form our first church here in Bogota. There needs to be baptisms and selection of leaders to get the paperwork legally recognized.

Isn't God good!

Shirley Johnson—Bangkok, Thailand

In my first month in Bangkok, culture stress and I met face to face. A lot of Bangkok reality started hitting home my second week here. I hadn't met any Westerners interested in establishing a friendship. Positive interaction with Thais was practically nonexistent. It was

rare to be understood totally. I had some rather negative experiences. I rapidly lost my motivation to learn the language. It's hard to be motivated when you don't want to talk with people. I was discouraged and felt alone among so many.

But on September 9th, exactly one month after I left home, I ventured out on a bus trip to a Bible study. It was the most uplifting time I have had, both in fellowship with a few other single women and in talking with Thais as I traveled to and from the study. The study was on Isaiah 6:1-8, "Here am I; send me!" "Lord, you have some sense of humor!" was my first thought! It was so encouraging, too, to have positive and not "neutral to negative" interaction with Thais. By no means did I understand everything, but I felt good about trying. It gave me a reason to keep learning Thai.

I knew I needed people and had been praying for them all week. My prayers were answered that night. It was so encouraging. I have been much happier since then. What an answer to prayer!

Deviations from cultural expectations

Tim and Lynette Hershberger—Zambia

The Annual General Conference in Zambia was held August 12 to 16, 1987. At various times this conference demonstrated deviations from cultural expectations. The present bishop of 10 years, Bishop Silungwe, chose not to be nominated for another term. Culture says that one in leadership should do the job until he dies. A new bishop was then elected who is under 40 years of age, very young for leadership in this culture. Also, debatable issues are not generally discussed in public if it may be embarrassing to those among the group. This year several issues were discussed on the conference floor very openly and freely with the concern centering on the well-being of the church. Remember the Zambian church as they deal with the changes and adjustments. Specifically pray for Brother Enock Shamapani as he assumes the responsibility of bishop. He was consecrated on October 18, 1987. (See related article, pp. 16-17.) ■

It was then that we sent an urgent plea for the church at home to join us in prayer for some mature or growing Christians to emerge from somewhere. Then it happened.

One day we ran into Goliath Phiri on the streets of Mufulira. We pulled our car off to the side.

"What are you doing here?"

"What are *you* doing here?"

During much fast chatter, we learned that Goliath had been assigned to the Mufulira Division of the copper mines as an auditor. He told us where he lived with his wife and child.

We thought back to our Lusaka days six or eight years earlier when we first saw this hefty and vibrant Christian young man singing his heart out on the front row in a nearby church we often visited Sunday nights. Could it be that a friendship back there was meant for our time of need? We dared not entertain such thoughts as he belonged to another church.

Goliath appeared at a Sunday morning service and must have been shocked at the shrunken attendance.

He came for dinner and asked about our church doctrine. Some days later he announced that he and his wife wished to join us. (Our encouragement level was beginning to rise as God was working through your prayers.)

Because Goliath was so well known among Christian college students, it wasn't surprising that young miners, just having finished specialty colleges and been assigned to Mufulira, migrated toward this spiritual pillar.

"We want to come to your church," they told him. He had been with us long enough to reply, "It's hard work where I am; you better go to an already established group."

"We want the challenge," they replied.

And so it was that two, then three, then four committed Christian miners joined our group. Then another committed young man arrived to manage a men's clothier . . . this one a Tonga.

We never could have dreamed it: six people coming together, each from a different tribe, becoming the core of our church-planting effort.

This set the church up for reaching beyond the Tonga people. English became the accepted language in our services.

Now we are humbled to remember that *prayer works*. What did Jeremiah say? "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things . . . which thou knowest not." Before we even called, the answer was being prepared. What if we with you had not called?! Another thought disturbs me: how many answers are ready to be granted with all the needs around the world, if only more people would *ask*?

Well, there's more to the Mufulira-through-prayer story. That will come later.

World Christian Intercessors is promoted by Missions Prayer Fellowship in cooperation with Brethren in Christ World Missions. If you would like to become a World Christian Intercessor beginning in 1988, contact Brethren in Christ World Missions, P.O. Box 390, Mount Joy, PA 17552.

Seeking a common vision

by Daniel Hertzler

In their role as group of final review for four North American Mennonite-related denominations, the Council of Moderators and Secretaries called an "Inter-Mennonite Consultation and Review of Inter-Mennonite Agencies." Meeting at Cabrini Retreat Center, Des Plaines, Ill., Oct. 22-24, the consultation pondered the question of church renewal from an organizational standpoint.

Earlier consultations called to review inter-Mennonite activity had been held in 1974 and 1982. A report brought by Wilbert Shenk indicated that a current survey found a total of 115 inter-Mennonite "agencies, boards, and committees engaged in some activity conducted on an inter-conference basis." This, he reported, has increased from 72 in 1974, although 19 of those included in 1974 are no longer in existence. (Though not

always clearly stated, "inter-Mennonite" is intended to include also the Brethren in Christ who have membership on the Council of Moderators and Secretaries, along with the Mennonite Brethren, the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church.)

Not all 115 inter-Mennonite organizations were invited (summoned?) to the consultation. But several dozen appeared. Some questions posed at the beginning of the consultation were: How do the various activities fit within a common vision? Is there a common vision? And, where do inter-Mennonite groups find accountability? A good time was had by all, but, as near as I could tell, none of these questions was answered by the consultation.

Indeed, the less-than-representative nature of the Council of Moderators

and Secretaries itself illustrates the problem. Although repeatedly invited to participate, a number of smaller Mennonite groups have not come to the meetings of the council. So whenever the council speaks, its words must be qualified by the knowledge that it does not represent all North American Mennonites.

Three types of inter-Mennonite organizations were invited to the meeting and gave reports: 1) program agencies, 2) councils, and 3) associations. As I review my notes on the program, it does not appear that the differences between the three sorts of organizations are as clear-cut as might be implied. However, organizations of the first sort would seem to need the most attention from the standpoint of support and accountability. Mennonite Central Committee, for example, is the most widely supported and generally recognized inter-Mennonite organization. At first glance its task would seem obvious: giving food to the hungry and clothes to the naked. But a second and third glance reveal that its work is complex and multi-faceted. How shall MCC be made accountable for its work and financially supported to meet its opportunities? As MCC executive secretary John A. Lapp observed, "We have had to use the denominational network. But we don't get through so we create our own network and then we create an overload."

Similar questions face Mennonite World Conference, another task-oriented worldwide inter-Mennonite organization which asks for modest offerings from Mennonites around the world and receives even more modest contributions. "Where in the 21st century will be the mandate for inter-Mennonite activities?" wondered MWC secretary Paul Kraybill.

Councils and associations have less need to be concerned about support and accountability since each has its own source of these. Councils, it was observed, are "to stay in touch." Associations are "to do things together." General Conference president Florence Driedger observed that "if we were all one church we would still need councils to get together."

Brooding over the assembly was the question of whether North American Mennonites could find their way to some kind of organizational unity. No one present saw a clear route to this. Indeed some wondered what might be the effect of a merger of the two largest groups, the General Conference and the Mennonite Church. If this were brought about, would it improve or hamper the



Scholarship for the Young Church Musician

The Board for Congregational Life is pleased to announce that Anthony Hoke and Juanita Freeman have been selected as the recipients of the Scholarship for the Young Church Musician. Each of these young persons has been awarded a \$200 music scholarship to be used for private music lessons.

Anthony is actively involved in the music program of the Palmyra, Pa., congregation. His musical interests include voice, piano, organ, and French horn. He plans to use his scholarship to continue his voice and piano lessons. Anthony is presently serving as church organist, plays in an instrumental ensemble, performs vocal solos and duets, and is in charge of the music for his youth department. In the fall of 1988, Anthony plans to study music education and vocal performance at Westminster Choir College. He plans to continue his role as church organist and would like to direct a church choir.

Juanita has been an active participant in the music program of the Upland, Calif., congregation. Her musical interests include voice, piano, and flute. She plans to use her scholarship to continue her flute lessons. Juanita is presently a member of her church orchestra, has performed in numerous vocal and instrumental ensembles, and has participated for several years in the "Young Artists Recital" which is held annually at her church. Juanita is planning to continue her musical involvements at her church and would like to someday attend college and major in music.

Congratulations, Anthony and Juanita!

*These music scholarships are sponsored by the
Board for Congregational Life through its Music Trust Fund*

The "Mennonite" connection

Have you ever wondered why so many Mennonite references crop up in *Visitor* articles and news items? It's because of the numerous and varied Mennonite activities and organizations in which the Brethren in Christ actively participate. In the last few years, we've shared together in the following areas:

Mennonite Central Committee
Mennonite Central Committee (U.S.)
Mennonite Central Committee (Canada)
Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section
MCC Thrift Shops
Mennonite Relief Sales
Mennonite Disaster Service
Mennonite World Conference
Council of International Ministries
Council of Moderators and Secretaries
Council on Church and Media
Council of Mennonite Colleges
Intercollegiate Peace Fellowship

Inter-Mennonite Home Ministries Council
Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging
Mennonite Health Association
Mennonite Medical Association
Mennonite Mental Health Association
Mennonite Mutual Aid Association
Mennonite Economic Development Associates
Foundation Series Publishing Council
Meetinghouse Editors' Group
Rejoice Devotional Guide
Church Member Profile II
Mennonite-Your-Way Travel Directory
Menno Travel Service
Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society
Keystone Bible Institutes

(This is only a partial list. In a few cases, such as the *Rejoice* devotional guide, the Brethren in Christ are no longer involved directly in the project.)

overall atmosphere of Mennonite unity? "This change could upset the equilibrium" observed John A. Lapp, and Paul Kraybill wondered "what would this say to our global relations? What about groups around the world that have traditionally related to one or the other? Have they been consulted?"

Paul Lederach, pastor of Franconia Mennonite Church, was concerned about the idea that if we get everything together, everything will be under control. He suggested that a merger of two Mennonite groups would result in three: the new group plus members of each of the two former groups who refuse to go along.

Yet considerable discomfort was expressed by some with the term "inter-Mennonite" as more than a transitional expression. Can it not lead to a time when there will be one North American Mennonite Church? Paul Hiebert, a Mennonite Brethren anthropologist from Fuller Seminary suggested that "maybe at this point we need to set up more ways for cooperative work than looking at ourselves. There are very few denominations who do as much in ministry."

John K. Stoner of Mennonite Central Committee said, "I think Mennonites near the end of this century have an understanding of how Christ was sent that has value for evangelism. There are many views of Christ, but our view is not one to be apologetic about."

Don Shafer, general secretary of Brethren in Christ, asked, "What can we do together to attack a culture which is

leading us down the wrong way? We are being squeezed by the enemy. The culture that's inundating us is very organized."

James Lapp, executive secretary of the Mennonite Church, summarized at one point, "I hear two things called for: 1) Keep looking for clarity on a common vision. 2) There seems also to be a need for a group that gives direction to this common effort."

Among the observations of the Findings Committee was the concern for

accountability of inter-Mennonite organizations and the suggestion that the Council of Moderators and Secretaries would be one place for this to lodge. An inter-Mennonite consultation had no authority to give the council such a mandate. Indeed, is it not true that anything Mennonites do is expected to have its ultimate authorization in local congregations? Has this strength become a weakness? —*Daniel Hertzler, editor of the Gospel Herald, for Meetinghouse*

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Messiah College News

Oakes named new chairman of the board

Galen Oakes, Massillon, Ohio (Amherst Community congregation), was elected chairman of the Messiah College Board of Trustees at an October 16 meeting of the board.

President of Oakes Construction and father of five, Oakes is a Messiah Junior College classmate (1948) of outgoing board chairman Dr. Ernest L. Boyer. Also elected officers for the 1987-88 year were vice-chairman Charlie Byers (MJC '58), Columbus, Ind.; and secretary Emerson Frey (MC '57), Millersville, Pa. (Manor congregation).

Special appreciation was extended to outgoing board officers Mark Hess, Lancaster, Pa. (Pequea Valley congregation), who served as secretary for many years, and Dr. Boyer, of Princeton, N.J.

This year, members of the Board of Trustees as well as of the Board of Advisors and Messiah College administration had a retreat at Willow Valley Convention Center in Lancaster the Thursday before the official meetings held on campus. A distinguished panel of engineering educators, including faculty from Lehigh University, Drexel University, and LeTourneau College, discussed with board members engineering in a liberal arts setting.

Homecoming held

Near-perfect weather and well over 1,000 alumni turned out for Homecoming October 17, as events such as bed races, parade, an outdoor chicken barbecue, and a giant ice cream sundae were part of the "Better than Ever" theme. The Alumni Association awarded the class of 1962 with the S. R. Smith Cup for the highest percentage of a class attending, while the class of 1977 received the Enos Hess Cup for having the greatest number of class members in attendance.

Three individuals were honored by the Alumni Association: Dr. Daniel Chamberlain (Upland '53), president of Houghton College, received the Distinguished Alumnus Award; Dr. David Rosentrater (Messiah College '79), a physician from Bremen, Ind. (Nappanee congregation) received the Young Alumnus Achievement Award; and

Harry Hitchcock, long-time friend of Messiah from Lancaster, Pa., received the Alumni Appreciation Award.

Oxford professor gives Consortium lecture

British broadcaster and novelist Dr. E. David Cook told students and faculty at Messiah College October 20 that morality matters.

Cook is professor of philosophy at Oxford University and has authored



nine books, including *The Moral Maze* and *Thinking about Christianity*. Speaking at Messiah as the Christian College Consortium lecturer, he urged

Christians to pray for society and become the salt and light of the world, trying to make the Christian ethic and its morals as attractive and winsome as possible.

"Morality does matter to most people, but they're just not very good at thinking it through," Cook said. "That's where the spirit-filled Christian can help."

Cook also spoke with students about such moral matters as homosexuality and abortion, and commented on British reaction to the recent downtrodden state of American televangelists such as Jim Bakker and Oral Roberts.

"I think evangelicals are terrified in Britain that that kind of TV evangelism/religion will come over to Britain as something which is a mindless activity which stresses emotion and which has at

its heart raising money for self-aggrandisement rather than for something positive."

He noted that so far, however, religious broadcasters in Britain haven't lost any significant financial support because of the fallout from the PTL scandal.

Second annual Learn & Lunch program planned

Saturday, March 19, has been set aside for the second annual Learn & Lunch program sponsored by the Messiah College Auxiliary. Featured speaker will be Nancy Good Sider (Messiah College '74), a counselor at Eastern Mennonite College.

A full morning of workshops is being planned, with topics of interest to women of all ages. For more information, contact Rebekah Basinger, assistant to the president for special projects, at (717) 766-2511, or write her at Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027.

35th annual March Sports Tournament

Messiah College will again host the Brethren in Christ Sports Tournament for the Allegheny and Atlantic conferences in March. This year's tournament, to be held March 11-12, 14-15 and 17-19, will be the 35th annual event.

Athletic events include men's basketball, women's volleyball, doubles ping pong, and mixed bowling. Registration is requested by December 25. Any interested church or individual should contact Tournament Director Dean Lehman (Mechanicsburg congregation) by mail at R.D. 5, P.O. Box 203, Dillsburg, PA 17019, or by phone at (717) 432-4119.

College-bound high school seniors: apply for financial aid now

Here are four steps to follow in applying for financial aid for the 1988-1989 academic year.

1. Identify the types of financial aid for which you may qualify. The Messiah College (Grantham, PA 17027) Financial Aid Office has a packet of helpful brochures that it will send to interested students. Contact this office and ask for the materials mentioned in the December 1987 *Evangelical Visitor*.

2. Discuss the availability of state/provincial and local community scholarships, grants, and loans with your school guidance counselor.

3. Many financial aid programs require students to demonstrate financial need. For example, at Messiah the Financial Aid Form (FAF) is used to determine financial need for non-Pennsylvania residents. Pennsylvania residents file the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) application to determine financial need. Need analysis forms should be completed and submitted during January and February.

4. Submit your financial aid application early. High school students should apply for financial aid in January or February.

Church News



Morris Sider ordained

After several decades of distinguished and dedicated service in the Brethren in Christ Church, Morris Sider was ordained to the Christian ministry on September 27, 1987, at the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church.

Harvey Sider, Bishop of the Canadian Conference and brother to Dr. Sider, preached the ordination sermon. Also participating in the service were Dr. Robert Ives, senior pastor at the Grantham Church, Rev. Mark Redfearn, pastor of two United Churches of Christ in Littlestown and son-in-law of Dr. Sider, Dr. Martin Schrag, member of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine, and Bishop Frank Kipe of the Allegheny Conference.

Dr. Sider is the son of Rev. Earl and the late Elsie Sider, and grew up in the Cheapside Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario. He graduated from Upland College, and received a Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1966. Since 1963, he has been Professor of History and English Literature at Messiah College and a member of the Grantham Church.

He also serves as the denominational archivist and as editor of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*, the journal of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. He is currently on the Board of Administration and the Assistant Moderator for the 1986-88 General Conference biennium. A prolific writer, Dr. Sider has written histories of Upland and Messiah College as well as several biographies and other histories. His most recent publication is *Leaders Among Brethren: Biographies of Henry Ginder and Charlie Byers*.

Married to Leone Dearing, originally from Saskatchewan, he and his wife

have two grown daughters, Karen and Donna, and two grandchildren.

Edwin Kessler ordained

Edwin R. Kessler, associate pastor of the Free Grace congregation, Millersburg, Pa., was ordained to the Christian ministry on Sunday, Oct. 4, 1987.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Kessler of Lykens, Pa., and is married to the former Andrea J. Leitzel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Leitzel of Elizabethtown, Pa. A graduate of Messiah College, he is presently a student in the Master of Divinity program at the Evangelical School of Theology, Myerstown, Pa.

Participating in the service of ordination were Bishop John A. Byers, Rev. Luke L. Keefer, Sr. (former pastor), Rev. Edgar Keefer (a friend of the Kesslers), and Rev. C. R. Burgard, pastor.

Alan Johnson ordained

An ordination service was held Oct. 25 in the Kindersley (Sask.) Brethren in Christ Church for Alan H. Johnson, pastor. Bishop Harvey R. Sider brought the sermon and led in the ritual of ordination.

Born and raised in Alberta, Alan attended Miller Memorial Bible Institute and Briercrest Bible College. He is presently completing his Bachelor of Religious Education and Bachelor of Theology degrees from Briercrest. For two years while attending college, he preached alternate Sundays between the Mennonite Church in Blumenhof and the Evangelical Church of Canada in Hodgeville.

He and his wife Lynn (Bader) have

five children: Laura, Christopher, Jennifer, Aaron, and Sarah. In July of 1984 the family answered God's call to a full-time ministry, and moved to Kindersley to serve as the pastoral family in the Brethren in Christ Church.

Over 100 people attended the service of ordination, with many friends from his home congregation in Alberta, including Alan's former pastor, enjoying the service and fellowship dinner.

Del Oswald retires as CLB manager

Del Oswald has recently retired as a full-time Christian Light Bookstore manager. He began as manager of the Waynesboro, Pa., bookstore in March of 1976. In 1980 he picked up managerial responsibilities for the new



Christian Light Bookstore in Hagerstown, Md. And in 1983, he added a third store—the new Christian Light Bookstore in Frederick, Md.—to his responsibilities. (In 1984 and 1986, local managers were appointed to the Waynesboro and Frederick stores respectively.)

Living in Hagerstown, Del now serves as a field representative for Christian Light Bookstores in Maryland, working with churches to acquaint them with Christian education curriculum and other products and services offered by the bookstores.

Congregational News Notes

Allegheny Conference

The Men's Fellowship of the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., sponsored a night of prayer for revival on Oct. 23. • Evangelistic services were held Oct. 25-Nov. 1 at the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg, with Mechanicsburg pastor, Ken Hepner. • In mid-October, the youth of the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., met with Andrea Hoke and Lisa Roland for a presentation on summer missions. Ken Smith was revival speaker Nov. 2-8. • Oct. 25, Roy H. Wenger,

pastor of the **Carlisle**, Pa., congregation from 1928-1954, was honored with the title of Pastor Emeritus. The Youth Choir planned to present the musical "Now Hear It Again" on Nov. 22.

On Oct. 14, Roy Saner talked to the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., about the ministry of Habitat for Humanity, an organization which builds houses for the needy. • Nazarene pastor David Prater was renewal services speaker for the **Cedar Heights** congregation, Mill Hall, Pa., the week of Oct. 18. • The women of the **Chambersburg**, Pa., congregation began a study on

Nov. 2: "The Key to Your Child's Heart." The congregation recently heard a report about Pastor and Mrs. Brubaker's trip to Africa. • The **Clarence Center** congregation installed Jeffrey House as associate pastor on Oct. 11.

This fall the **Cumberland Valley**, Dillsburg, Pa., children's workers launched their Wednesday night Discovery Time on the theme "The Bible Alphabet." An African meal began a recent missions conference. • The **Dillsburg**, Pa., congregation recently had a hymnal dedication service. Dick and Louise Alderfer led a family life weekend Oct. 10-11. • The youth of the **Fairview Ave.** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., had a 30-hour "Planned Famine" for world hunger Nov. 13-14. • Luke Keefer, Sr., led revival meetings Nov. 1-8 at the **Five Forks** church, Waynesboro.

The Diamond Street Mennonite Church Choir presented a concert of sacred music recently for the **Grantham**, Pa., congregation. A neighborhood visitation committee has been formed. • Oct. 25 was Rally Day for the **Green Grove** congregation, Spring Mills, Pa. Earl Herr was speaker on the family Nov. 8-14. • On Oct. 11 Nelson Byers, manager of the Christian Light Bookstore in Chambersburg, Pa., represented the Board for Media Ministries in a program for the **Hanover**, Pa., congregation. R. Stanton Williams, Assembly of God pastor, was evangelist Nov. 8-11.

Henry Ginder was the guest of the **Hollowell** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., in early October. An Assimilating New Members Seminar was held at the church on Oct. 22. • The **Locust Grove** congregation, York, Pa., had an Oct. 31 teacher appreciation banquet. Nov. 8 was Rally Day with a drama and music team from Messiah College. • The **Marsh Creek** congregation, Howard, Pa., had a ham sandwich sale in October to help pay the fee for those taking the Child Evangelism training course. Simon Lehman, Jr., planned to be with the congregation Nov. 29 for a communion service.

The Big Valley men's chorus gave a concert Oct. 11 for the **Martinsburg**, Pa., congregation. • A "Go Ye Airlines Tour" was the children's part of the **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., congregation's missions conference Oct. 9-11. Church planter Jacob Samuel was the keynote speaker. • Returned missionaries, Dan and Karen Deyhle, spoke Oct. 4 to the **Messiah Village** congregation, Mechanicsburg. • Former pastor Paul Z. Hess was homecoming speaker recently for the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa.

A Nov. 22 missions day at **Morning Hour Chapel**, East Berlin, Pa., included speaker Louis Cober, an international noon meal, and the film "First Fruits." • The **Mt. Rock** and **South Mountain Chapel** congregations, Shippensburg, Pa., had a joint hymn sing on Oct. 18. • The **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., had a mother-daughter banquet Oct. 24. • The **Peace Light** Singers, Gettysburg, Pa., gave a gospel music concert on Oct. 25 to start revival services. The theme for the week was "The Church—A

Force or a Farce." • Norman and Betty Charles from Abundant Living visited the **Pleasant View** congregation, Red Lion, Pa., for morning and evening services, Oct. 18.

The **Roseglenn** congregation, Duncannon, Pa., had a 25th anniversary celebration Nov. 1 with Carl Swartz, their first Sunday school teacher, speaking. Charlie Byers then led revival meetings Nov. 1-8 on "Reconciling Grace." • The Walk Through the Bible Seminar was held Oct. 9-10 at the **Van Lear** church, Williamsport, Md. The Oct. 25 Rally Day featured the Wingert Family singers, a carry-in meal, and a video presentation. • Gospel recording artist Dave Moore sang Oct. 18 at the **Wesley** church, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa. • On Oct. 11, the Spirit Force drama team from Messiah College and the Antrim Singers participated in Rally Day at the **West Shore** church, Enola, Pa.

Atlantic Conference

Oct. 18 was Friends Sunday at **Community Bible Chapel**, Sarasota, Fla. Members participated in the Victory Village Walk-a-thon on Nov. 7. • The Women's Fellowship reach-out committee of the **Elizabethtown**, Pa., church planned a Thanksgiving Day dinner for the needy. Spiritual Life services with Arthur Climenhaga were planned for Nov. 22-24. • The **Fairland** congregation, Cleona, Pa., donated desks and chairs to the **Hershey**, Pa., congregation. Fairland Pastor Bosserman gave a 10-sermon series from October to December on marriage.

A farewell service was held recently to honor Grace Lenker, a 76-year attendee of the **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa., who moved to Palmyra. A film about the Bible, "A Sure Foundation," was viewed Oct. 18. • On Oct. 11, Clarence Yates, retired pastor and leader of the Orlando Bible Institute, spoke to the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla. • Two ladies' Bible studies began in the fall for the **Hummelstown**, Pa., congregation. Special services with Jim and Bonnie Harris were held Oct. 31-Nov. 4.

The youth of the **Lancaster**, Pa., congregation planned to sponsor a soup and sandwich fund-raiser on Nov. 15. Lamar Dourte and Alice Dourte presented a concert on Nov. 1. • The Men's Fellowship of the **Manor** congregation, Mountville, Pa., hosted a steak dinner Oct. 17 with local teacher-athlete H. Grant Hurst as speaker. • The **Mastersonville** congregation, Manheim, Pa., observed October as Missions Month with weekly missions moments in the morning services. • A skit, "For Great Is Your Reward," was part of the Oct. 24-25 missions conference of the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa.

The Oct. 27 Women's Fellowship meeting of the **Palmyra**, Pa., congregation concentrated on learning the art of Scherenschnitte. • Nov. 15 was Club Awareness Sunday for the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa., with the clubs sharing in the morning service. Nov. 22 was the fall fellowship supper with the Marshall Poes as guests. • The **Refton**, Pa., congregation collected food bags for Quarryville Food Bank and Water Street Mission in November.

The **Silverdale**, Pa., congregation sponsored an Oct. 31 Halloween Party at the church for children up to 12 years old. The young married couples had a get-acquainted night on Oct. 14. • By popular request, the **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., had a "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" on Oct. 25. The congregation planned a retreat at Kenbrook Camp Nov. 13-15 on the theme: "Com-

munication within the Family of God." • The first annual revival services were held Oct. 4-7 at the **Summit View** church with Charlie Byers of the Gospel Tide Hour.

Canadian Conference

On Oct. 18 at the **Cheapside** church, Nanticoke, Ont., Paul Nigh spoke in the morning and the group Proverbs sang in the evening. Revival meetings with Ross Nigh were Nov. 1-8. • Alice Huff of OMS International spoke to the **Falls View** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont., on Oct. 25. The ladies' annual bazaar was Oct. 31. • Herbert Heppner, minister of visitation at Baview Glen Church, was speaker morning and evening Oct. 4 for the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont. A concert by Triumphant Sound was Oct. 18. • Two persons were baptized Oct. 18 into the **Kindersley**, Sask., congregation. On Oct. 20, Rev. D. Clark of the Leprosy Mission presented a film and report on activities around the world.

The **Massey Place** congregation, Saskatoon, Sask., has announced its coming 25th anniversary celebration for June 2-4, 1988. • On Oct. 18, the focus was on India when Harvey Sider visited the **North East Community** congregation, Calgary, Alb., for a service and noon potluck. • The **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation had a commissioning service Nov. 22 for John and Esther Edmonds, missionaries to Malawi. • The **Port Colborne**, Ont., congregation had a Sunday school workers appreciation banquet on Oct. 22. Walter Winger spoke in special meetings Nov. 8-11. • Dave Illman was speaker for revival services Oct. 22-25 at the **Ridgemount** church, Hamilton, Ont.

Elsie Cressman, retired missionary to Africa, was speaker for the Oct. 19 mother-daughter banquet of the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont. The "Turn Your Heart Toward Home" film series was viewed this fall. • Oct. 25 was Timber Bay Day for the **Sherkston**, Ont., congregation. Members donated boys' and girls' attire. The congregation slated participation in a Nov. 7 workshop on "Doing Shalom: the basis for peacemaking in Christian community." • Sandy and Christie Gooderham and the group Soul Foundation ministered on October Sundays to the **Springvale** congregation, Hagersville, Ont.

Central Conference

Ralph Palmer from Ashland, Ohio, was guest speaker Nov. 1 for the **Amherst** congregation, Massillon, Ohio. • Palmer was also Sunday morning speaker for the Third Quinquennial Homecoming and 75th Anniversary celebration of the **Bethel** congregation, Merrill, Mich. Samuel Oldham, former pastor, spoke Saturday evening. • The children of the **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, enjoyed a Hallelujah party on Oct. 30. They dressed up as and told about a Bible character. • The first morning service of the **Cahaba Valley** congregation, Birmingham, Ala., is planned for Dec. 20. • The **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind., concluded a month of missionary emphasis in October by listening to a tape from the Curtis Books.

James Allen was installed Oct. 25 as pastor of the **DeRossett**, Tenn., congregation. • The **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Ohio, experienced "Five Nights for Growth" with Ken Gibson, Oct. 31-Nov. 4. The congregation had a blanket drive in November for Heaven's Gate Women's Shelter in San Francisco. • The youth of the **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Ohio, had a bake sale and car wash in October to defray expenses for

The University Mennonite Church of State College, Pa., plans to mark its 25th anniversary with a "Homecoming" celebration on June 18 and 19, 1988. If you have attended University Mennonite in the past, please send your name, address, and telephone number to Joel Weidner, 455 East Foster Ave., State College, PA 16801 as soon as possible, but no later than January 31, 1988. We will send you additional information and include you in our anniversary directory.

"Let YOUTH Care." A thank you chili supper for nursery workers was Oct. 17. • Pastor Ron Smith of the **Lakeview** congregation, Goodrich, Mich., preached a "Back to Basics" series this fall. The congregation had a clothing exchange on Nov. 14.

The over-50 generation of the **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mich., presented the musical "The Time of our Lives" on Nov. 1. • Denominational archivist Morris Sider, in Ohio for the annual Historical Society meeting, delivered the morning message for the **Pleasant Hill** congregation on Nov. 7. The congregation sponsored the MCC Third World Crafts Bazaar on Nov. 14. • The **Sippo Valley** congregation, Massillon, Ohio, has set up a reconciliation panel patterned after that of the Board of Brotherhood Concerns. • On Nov. 21, the **Union Grove** congregation, New Paris, Ind., planned an old fashioned River Brethren soup fellowship at which they learned the history and tradition of the dish.

Midwest Conference

On Oct. 29, Sam Minter showed slides of his work with Mennonite Disaster Service to the **Abilene**, Ks., congregation. • Pastor Rickel of the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Okla., preached a fall series on dealing with "emotional giants": guilt, fear, despondency, etc. • Members of the Bethany church traveled to Cedar Hill, Tx., to help the **Fellowship** congregation prepare a new parking lot. • The **Mound Park** congregation, Dallas Center, Iowa, and the **Oak Park** congregation, Des Moines, Iowa, had a joint hayride on Oct. 31. Three persons were received as members of Oak Park in October. • Five members of the **Oklahoma City**, Okla., congregation participated recently in a church leaders' seminar with John Maxwell. The congregation planned a harvest party for Oct. 31. • On Oct. 4, the **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., viewed the Luis Palau video, "Hope for the Heart of America."



Centennial festivities on Oct. 17-18 for the Zion Church included talks by men and their wives who have pastored there. (Pictured from left to right): Paul Hess (1974-79), Ron Howell (current pastor), Kevin Ryan (1979-84), Henry Miller (1956-68), and John Hawbaker (1968-74).

Pacific Conference

Ken Letner led an Oct. 9 seminar for parents and teachers of the **Glendora**, Calif., congregation on building self-esteem in children. A Sunday school open house was held Oct. 11. Ontario Red Lion Inn was the site of an early December Christmas banquet. • The **Moreno Community** congregation, Moreno Valley, Calif., has "Weigh and Pray" meetings on Thursdays. A "Back to School Night" Oct. 16 focused attention on Moreno Christian School. Oct. 25 was Missions Sunday. • "Reaching for Renewal" was the theme for the **Ontario**, Calif., congregation's family camp, Oct. 23-25 at Mile High Pines Camp. The

congregation began an outreach to the handicapped at Casa Colina in the fall. Bob Saunders of Mexico Inland Mission spoke recently to the congregation.

Rosetta Brinlee and Ronald Barnick of the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore., attended a Christian education convention Oct. 2-3 with Dr. David Hocking and Dr. Donald Joy as speakers. Several members also heard Peter Dyck speak Oct. 9-10 at the annual MCC Assembly and Fall Festival. Free airplane rides were given by Pastor Hostetler to winners in a church attendance contest. • In October and November, the **Riverside**, Calif., congregation studied some of the doctrines and practices which help create Brethren in Christ identity: sanctification, servanthood, peacemaking, simplicity, separation, and community. The children took a trip Oct. 24 to Griffith Park Observatory. • A Harvest Fair was the all Sunday school project of the **Upland**, Calif., congregation on Oct. 31. It included cake walks, food booths, a pre-carved pumpkin contest, and games.

For the Record

Births

Andrews: William Gregory, Sept. 24; Omar and Darlene (Maddona) Andrews, Stowe congregation, Pa.

Brubaker: Daniel Wayne and Brianne Jean, Sept. 25; Wayne and Karyn Brubaker, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Burgess: Christopher Roy, Sept. 29; Steve and Liz Burgess, Cheapside congregation, Ont.

Caldwell: Adam Michael, Oct. 11; Ray and Lisa (Groff) Caldwell, Manor congregation, Pa.

Coldsmith: Matthew Evan, Oct. 7; Ed and Libby Coldsmith, Grantham congregation, Pa.

Dietz: Keri Lynne, Oct. 3; S. David and Sharon (Miller) Dietz, Manor congregation, Pa.

Falls: Kevin Andrew, Oct. 14; Dave and Denise (Robb) Falls, Cedar Heights congregation, Pa.

Hagans: Sara Rose, Sept. 17; David R. and Angela (Conrad) Hagans, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Hale: David Lamar, Sept. 18; Tom and Gina (Rissinger) Hale, Highland congregation, Ohio.

Hogg: Alison Patricia Faith, Sept. 30; Craig and Patricia (Hicks) Hogg, Heise Hill congregation, Ont.

Kreider: Leann Marie, Oct. 20; John and Susan Kreider, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Maynard: Virginia Leah, Aug. 14; Paul and Patricia Maynard, Hanover congregation, Pa.

McCombs: Amy Lynn, Sept. 22; David and Lori McCombs, Bertie congregation, Ont.

Meyers: Whitney Rochelle, Oct. 5; Alan and Kendra (Eberly) Meyers, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Mortier: Adam Everette, Aug. 8; Dana and Quayle Mortier, Glendora congregation, Calif.

Musser: Derrick James, Oct. 6; Jay and Gayle Musser, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Nemith: Tonya Nichole, Oct. 11; Steve and Deb Nemith, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Nunamaker: Joshua Dean, Oct. 6; Bob and Laurie Nunamaker, Martinsburg congregation, Pa.

Prough: Tori Grace, Oct. 19; Todd Prough and Kimberley Prough, Union Grove congregation, Ind.

Ream: Katelyn, Sept. 25; Albert and Jeanne Ream, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Rosentrater: Liesel Ingrid, Oct. 11; Eldon and Nancy (Lehman) Rosentrater, Manor congregation, Pa.

Senften: Kari Lynne, Sept. 26; Bob and Karen Senften, Amherst congregation, Ohio.

Thrush: Jessica Renee, Sept. 30; Robert and Diane (Emby) Thrush, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Troost: Wesley Anton, Sept. 12; Dirk and Colleen (Grove) Troost, Nagele, Netherlands.

Ulery: Kristen Dale, Oct. 10; Kreg and Martha Ulery, Bethlehem, Pa.

Witmer: Jon Lewis, Sept. 25; Lewis and Judy (Burkholder) Witmer, Manor congregation, Pa.

Zimmerman: Harold Martin III, Oct. 7; Martin and Marcie (Berger) Zimmerman, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Biller-Sider: Cassandra Pauline, daughter of Larry and Sharon Sider, Fort Erie, Ont., and Scott Robert, son of Robert and Deanna Biller, Fort Erie, Oct. 3 in the Sherkston Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Day officiating.

Etter-Wingert: Janelle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eber Wingert, Chambersburg, Pa., and Troy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Etter, Marion, Pa., Oct. 10 at the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Falls-Krupa: Leslee, daughter of Mattis and Joan Krupa, Woolrich, Pa., and Dana, son of Russell and Hazel Falls, Avis, Pa., Oct. 1 in Maryland.

Fox-Burns: Laura Nell, daughter of Thurman and Sarah Burns, Huntsville, Ala., and Joseph III, son of Bill and Rosalee Fox, Englishville, N.J., Sept. 19 at Estes Chapel, Wilmore, Ky., with Rev. Joe Hyatt and Rev. Donna Jones officiating.

Francis-Buckwalter: Loraine Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Buckwalter, and Rexen Eliphaz Francis, Sept. 14, at Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Frymire-Heisey: Shirley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Z. Heisey, and Donald E. Frymire of Pharr, Tx., Oct. 3 in Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. M. Eugene Heidler officiating.

Gilbert-Witter: Linda F., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Omar Witter, Greencastle, Pa., and Terry E., son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Gilbert, Fayetteville, Pa., Oct. 17 in the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Stanley A. Cordell officiating.

Hawbaker-Wolffe: Claudine Wolffe and William Hawbaker, Sept. 18 in the bride's home, Waynesboro, Pa., with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Lofthouse-Wideman: Bonnie Jean, daughter of Glen and Jean Wideman, Gormley, Ont., and Donald Levi, son of Glen and Dorothy Lofthouse, Englehart, Ont., Sept. 5 at the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ronald Lofthouse and Rev. Marlin Ressler officiating.

Myers-Kendle: Donna Renee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Garry Kendle, Greencastle, Pa., and Dean Ellis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Myers, Shady Grove, Pa., Sept. 27 in the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur W. Benner officiating.

Peckman-Andrews: Betty J. Andrews and Lester H. Peckman, Oct. 11 during the morning worship service of the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. A. Graybill Brubaker and Rev. Paul Haagen officiating.

Phibbs-House: Tara, daughter of Gordon and

Jean House, and Rick, son of Dwight and Martha Phibbs, Oct. 17 in the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Greg Funk officiating.

Prowell-Schildt: Nancy Arlene Schildt, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Luke L. Keefer, Sr., Millersburg, Pa., and Donald Eugene, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Prowell, Palmyra, Pa., Oct. 3 at Free Grace Brethren in Christ Church, Millersburg, with Bishop John A. Byers and Rev. Luke L. Keefer officiating.

Russell-Steckley: Susan Jane, daughter of Lloyd and Ruth Steckley, Richmond Hill, Ont., and

Scott, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Russell, Richmond Hill, Sept. 19 at the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Marlin Ressler officiating.

Steckley-Leggatt: Sharon Michelle, daughter of Jack and May Leggatt, Rexdale, Ont., and Joel David, son of Alvin and Kathryn Steckley, Ridgeway, Ont., Sept. 12 at the Kipling Ave. Baptist Church, Rexdale, with Rev. M. Jean Stairs officiating.

Straub-Harter: Yvonne Elaine Harter, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Glossner, Mill Hall, Pa., and Lewis Ardel, son of Lewis and Verna

Money Matters

I recently received the following letter from Murray Sider, a retired layman living in Cambridge, Ontario, and a member of the Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church, near Kitchener. As you will see by his opening remarks, he uses the terms "Missions" and "Cooperative Ministries" interchangeably. That is, he is referring to funds given by the local congregation to "touch people around the world" with evangelism and nurture.

—Paul Hostetler

Dear Brother Paul:

I am sending the enclosed observations for your consideration. Most Brethren in Christ are aware of the great struggle which has ensued in recent times to raise our Cooperative Ministries or missions budget each year. If you think my comments will fulfill a useful purpose, you may include them in your section of the *Evangelical Visitor* or in any other publication.

Your brother in Christ,
Murray Sider

P.S. I wish to add a bit of information on how God is blessing our Rosebank congregation. We experienced a major building program in 1984. That year our Cooperative Ministries giving was increased over 1983, and the same thing has happened in the years following as you will observe if you check your Conference Minutes.

I checked! Rosebank Congregation gave to Brethren in Christ Ministries as follows: 1984—\$41,044, 25.70% of total receipts; 1985—\$43,472, 26.06% of total receipts; and 1986—\$53,178, 31.48% of total receipts. This year the budget goal is again increased. —P.H.

A Cooperative

I have noted with interest the statistics given in our Conference reports, both regional and general. It is noteworthy that Cooperative Ministries giving is often greatly reduced by those congregations which have had a major building program. Perhaps this is a natural expectation, but I will venture a suggestion which is surely worthy of consideration.

As I have observed for years, God certainly blesses those individuals and congregations which support missions (money sent away from home) liberally. Even though it is natural to want to pay off a large church mortgage as rapidly as possible, I am convinced that we defeat our purpose by not giving generously to missions.

I would like to draw attention to Bible incidents and teaching for our challenge and encouragement. What do we reasonably conclude would have happened to the widow at Zarephath had she refused Elijah's request that she bake a cake for him first, and then, with what was left, bake for herself and her son?

Then, let's go back further to the instructions given to God's people Israel through Moses. They were told to give God the *firstfruits* of their crops and offspring. This involves more than simply giving God our best; though he is surely worthy of it. As we give to God first, we are telling him that we trust him implicitly to supply our needs with what is left. The tithe is and was always to be paid first.

It is a universal law, corroborated by those who have courageously put it to test, that if we expect God's blessing upon us as individuals and congregations, we must put missions first in our church program.

Perhaps there are others of our middle age church members who remember, with me, the brother from outside our denomination who addressed this subject at our General Conference of 1963, hosted at Niagara Christian College. He cited, I believe, a personal experience from his pastoral ministry. He was called to pastor a congregation which had dwindled to 17 members. He also inherited a run-down church building and parsonage.

His strategy began with planning a missions convention, featuring a speaker who promoted faith-promise giving to missions. At that first convention the small group was inspired to pledge \$3,000

Straub, Mill Hall, Oct. 10 at the Dunstown United Methodist Church with Pastor John L. Bundy officiating.

Weidman-Bomberger: Bonnie B., daughter of Raymond and Evelyn Bomberger, Millersville, Pa., and William B., son of Donald and Dorothy Weidman, Millersville, Sept. 26 in the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Hawbaker and Rev. Robert Sheetz officiating.

Young-Stover: Jody, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Stover, Spring Mills, Pa., and Paul, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Young, Spring Mills, Oct. 17

at Green Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Paul Smucker officiating.

Obituaries

Beam: Delores M. Beam, born Sept. 12, 1935, the daughter of Paul G. Burkholder and the late Effie (Oberholtzer) Burkholder, died Oct. 16. In addition to her father, she is survived by her husband, J. Robert Beam; two sons, Todd W. and Terry L.; a brother, Paul S. Burkholder; a sister, LaDonna S. Naugle; and a grandson. One son,

Tony L., preceded her in death. She was a member of the Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. William Baublitz and Rev. Barton Starr. Interment was in the Air Hill Cemetery.

Deckert: Margaret Deckert, 91, died Sept. 29. No family survives. She was a member of the Skyline View Brethren in Christ Church, Harrisburg, Pa. Rev. John R. Reitz conducted the funeral service at the Knight Funeral Home, Highspire, Pa. Interment was in the Highspire Cemetery.

Horton: Clifford Kimble Horton, born July 20, 1901, died April 4. He is survived by his wife Mary; two sons, David and Mahlon Semach; three daughters, Blanche Pollard, Mary Rowell, and Donna Borbey; nine grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. Clifford was a charter member of the Boyle Brethren in Christ Church. Officiating at the funeral were Rev. John Young and Rev. J. Harold Sherk. Interment was at Maple Lawn Cemetery in Wainfleet, Ont.

Kramer: Kendra L. Kramer, 33, died Sept. 18. She is survived by her husband and three children. Kendra was a member of the Skyline View Brethren in Christ Church, Harrisburg, Pa. Officiating at the funeral service was Rev. John R. Reitz. Interment was in Broadview Cemetery, Hershey, Pa.

Meyers: Aaron H. Meyers, 81, born Dec. 29, 1905, died Oct. 3. He is survived by a daughter, Edith M. Leshner; a son, Martin Bair; one sister; three brothers; five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. Services were held at the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church where he had been a deacon for 25 years. Rev. Lorne Lichty and Bishop Charlie B. Byers officiated. Interment was in the Montgomery Cemetery.

Musser: Vesta Mae Musser, born Jan. 12, 1894, died Oct. 5. She was preceded in death by her husband, Noah Musser, in 1977. She is survived by 2 sons, David and John; 2 daughters, Frances, and Faithe Hoffman; a brother, Hostetter Engle; 11 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren. Born in Abilene, Ks., she was a faithful member of the Upland Brethren in Christ Church. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. John Snook and Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder. Entombment was in Bellevue Mausoleum.

Rohrer: Mary M. Rohrer, 87, born Jan. 30, 1900, the daughter of J. R. and Martha (Snyder) Wise, died Oct. 11. Mary was preceded in death by her first husband, Floyd Sweet, in 1974; her second husband, C. J. Rohrer, in April 1987; one son; one daughter; and a grandson. She is survived by a daughter, Esther Wolfe; a son, Ralph E., seven grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews. She had attended Brethren in Christ churches since 1913, first at the Dayton Mission, Ohio, then with membership at Beulah Chapel, Springfield, Ohio. Services were held at the Littleton Funeral Home. Interment was in Glen Haven Memorial Gardens.

Traver: Fred Clifford Traver, 86, died July 14. He was preceded in death by his wife Dorothy (Moore) in 1961. Surviving are his second wife, Agnes (Wilson); 2 daughters, Eileen Krick and Ester Saunders; a son, John; 10 grandchildren; 1 great-grandson; and a brother, George. Fred was a member of the Boyle Brethren in Christ Church, having served as deacon from 1937-1963. The funeral service was held at the Lampman Funeral Home with Rev. J. Harold Sherk officiating. Interment was in Zion Cemetery, Wainfleet, Ont.

Ministries challenge

for missions. God blessed them, and each year it was increased until after eight years they were giving \$25,000 to missions. In addition, they had repaired and improved the church building and parsonage, and the pastor was receiving a worthy salary.

The logical conclusion is that without a missionary challenge, this congregation would not have survived. With this experience and God's Word for our encouragement and challenge, I trust that in our congregational Cooperative Ministries giving we will take this step of faith. Unless we do practice this type of faith, we cannot expect the blessing promised in Malachi 3:10-12. Please accept this as being given in loving concern, and not with a censorious attitude.

Humbly submitted,
Murray Sider

A concluding word

A layman from another congregation told me an interesting story recently. He approached his pastor, much concerned that building program costs seemed to dictate a reduction in Cooperative Ministries giving in the budget for the new year. He said, "Pastor, I have just purchased a house and the mortgage payments are very heavy. If I follow the line of reasoning of our Church Board, I can easily justify my giving less to the church during my heavy payment years. Do you agree with that?"

The pastor did not agree. "Many people of our congregation have heavy expenses. If they followed that kind of rationalizing [finding an acceptable excuse for an unacceptable deed], we would soon be in real budget trouble."

But the pastor, to his credit, got the point—the local church budget should be a model for individual budgets. And he is working hard to bring about a change for the better in his congregation's giving to Cooperative Ministries. —Paul Hostetler

Dear Paul,

Lately I've been thinking about standards and perfection. Pope John Paul visited the United States recently. Amid all the pomp and pageantry of his visit there was much speculation as to whether he would rescind some of the strict moral teachings of the Catholic Church to make them more in tune with modern mores. He didn't.

Then I heard a Christian radio minister speak on the subject of situation ethics. He speculated on what the state of the Christian Church would be today if you had visited Corinth, spent some

time getting the feel of the social life of the city, and then possibly scaled down some of your own standards of Christian conduct. You didn't do it either.

I had to wonder whether the papal laws weren't formulated by men who studied the Bible and interpreted it to the best of their ability. Times and customs change, but I find it difficult to be critical when good moral standards are upheld, even though they originate from a different part of Christendom than we Brethren in Christ.

I recently talked to someone who

works in the operating room of a modern hospital. Much time is spent scrubbing in preparation for donning the surgical gowns, masks, and gloves. Strict protocol is observed during the entire procedure. If a break occurs in the "sterile technique," the entire process must be repeated. But I understand that a surgeon will not insist on strict asepsis before rendering aid in an emergency situation. When he returns to the operating room, however, he will not lower the standards for himself or his aides.

Sitting in the chapel of a church camp one Sunday morning, I was impressed by a line in a poem written in tribute to the camp itself. The author must have been exhilarated by his camping experience when he wrote, "You've given us a vision of perfect life." The verse was carved on a large redwood sign and prominently displayed behind the podium.

We all have visions of perfection, but who sets the standards and what happens when we can't meet them causes us some concern. A bowler dreams of a 300 game; a pitcher wants a perfect game in the World Series; we want to keep new appliances and equipment in perfect condition. Nothing can compare with the thrill and expectations experienced by parents at the birth of their newborn child.

Unless something was lost in translation, several Old Testament characters did achieve perfection, and a young man in the New Testament came close. The King James version uses the word "perfect" to describe Noah (Gen. 6:9) and Job (Job 1:1). The rich young ruler could have attained perfection if he had sold his goods and given to the poor (Matt. 18:21). Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:48 to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. This admonition is right in the middle of the Sermon on the

EVANGELISM & MISSIONS CONVENTION

JUNE 30 - JULY 1, 1988

preceding
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at
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- Dr. Fred Holland
- Dr. Roy V. Sider
- Rev. W. Edward Rickman
- Rev. Robert Hempy

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Mount. Those chapters contain instructions which are extremely strict, especially in our modern, competitive business world. But you, Paul, seem to identify with our human frailty in Philippians 3:12-14 when you tell us you have not already attained perfection, but are pressing "toward the goal."

Unfortunately, we seldom if ever achieve any kind of perfection in this life. Worms, in order to survive, make little holes in our apples. Our new cars get dinged up in the parking lot. And before many years pass, we realize that your statement in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned" includes every innocent-looking newborn. Is there any use trying? Has any person except Jesus ever

measured up to God's standard of perfection?

David knew he had failed to live up to God's standard. He didn't expect God to change His laws, but confessed his sin. In Psalm 119, David repeatedly speaks of his love for God's law, commandments, and precepts. Parenthetically, this seems to reinforce the theory that children and youth really crave discipline, even when there seems to be continuous rebellion. Adults are better able to camouflage that rebellion.

I know I have posed a lot of questions in this letter. Would I be correct in drawing a few conclusions as follows?

1. We believe there is such a thing as Christian perfection. Living in a sinful

world with our rebellious tendencies, it is difficult to achieve that goal. Obedience, perhaps, means striving for the goal rather than attaining it.

2. Many standards of conduct are set by fallible humans who try to apply biblical laws to present day reality. Exceptions are necessary sometimes, but should not transcend the law.

3. High standards of Christian ethical and moral conduct are desirable, and will be respected, as long as they are fair, consistent, and based on an honest effort to correctly interpret Scripture.

I wonder what you think of these three conclusions.

Onesimus

Bishops' Column

Christmas: Is there something new to say?

by H. Frank Kipe

You and I often come to Christmas time and wondered: What is there new to say? The facts are always the same. The themes are all repeats. The people haven't changed. Each little phrase conjures up the same familiar thoughts. Try it:

"She [Mary] was found to be with child by the Holy Ghost."

"Joseph . . . be not afraid to take Mary as your wife."

"She shall have a son . . . you are to call him Jesus."

"They will call him Emmanuel, meaning 'God with us'."

"My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

"There were shepherds abiding in the fields at night, keeping watch over their flocks."

"I bring you good tidings of great joy."

"Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing."

"Mary treasured all these sayings in her heart."

"She [Anna] gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all."

"He [Simeon] praised God saying, . . . 'now dismiss your servant in peace . . . my eyes have seen.'"

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

"When you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him."

"They presented gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Words also carry meaning even from our childhood: taxing . . . stable . . . manger . . . sheep . . . star . . . inn . . . Bethlehem . . . angels . . . prophecies . . . Nazareth.

People, too, remind us of little details surrounding the birth of Christ: Elizabeth . . . Zechariah . . . Joseph . . . Mary . . . innkeeper . . . Herod . . . shepherds . . . singing angels . . . Anna . . . Simeon . . . wisemen.

Just being reminded of these statements, words and people, we can relive the Christmas story. However, a lot more needs to be said. As I reflect on the familiar realities of Christmas, I want to reflect also on the next expected coming of Jesus.

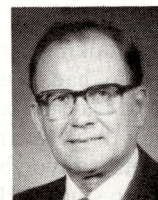
It is true, Jesus first came into the world to save sinners—all of us. God sent his Son to do this because he loved us. The story of the Incarnation is most fascinating indeed. Isaiah said of Christ's first coming, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Likewise, in reference to the second

coming, the Psalmist called Christ the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord Almighty (Psalm 24). John the Revelator reminds us over and over again that at the second coming, this Christ—the King of glory and Lord Almighty—will sit in judgment on all who do not believe in him and perform works of righteousness.

I close each year, around Christmas time, with the reading of the book of Revelation. I shudder to think of the awful judgment of God Almighty and his Son Jesus upon all those who are not prepared for his second coming.

The prophets, the apostles, the angels, and even Jesus himself spoke much more about the second coming of Christ than the first. Therefore, my thought for you this Christmas is this: may the familiarity of the Christmas story not rob us of the privilege and responsibility of telling our world that, though Jesus came first to bring us peace and salvation, he is coming again to bring judgment and eternal destiny for all.



H. Frank Kipe is bishop of the Allegheny conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Phoebe's Journal

Mary and the unexpected

If I had been in Mary's place, I wonder how well I would have coped. There she was, a normal young girl in Palestine, engaged to be married. She figured she knew how her life would be—marriage, children, taking care of the home—nothing unusual. She knew what to expect. Even if her life wouldn't be exciting, at least it would be predictable.

But predictability flew out the window the day the angel came. One day she was looking forward to marriage to Joseph, and the next she was pregnant, but not with his child, and not because

she had done anything. She was just there, minding her own business, being a good girl, and behold, she's pregnant! How would she explain that to her friends, her parents, her fiancé? What had she done to deserve this major disruption to the nice little life with Joseph she had planned?

Fortunately, Joseph had his own encounter with the angel, so instead of dumping her, as most men in his position would have done, he stayed. With this crisis over, the pregnancy went on normally—until they had to travel to Bethlehem. By this time, Mary was *very* pregnant, and a trip to Bethlehem wasn't exactly what she had in mind. But she went (what choice did she have?), and while she was there she had the baby—

not in a clean room in the best inn, but in a dirty stable with the cows and sheep. I can imagine Mary thinking, "Why me, Lord? If I had to get pregnant like this, couldn't I at least have had my baby in comfortable surroundings?"

In Luke's account of the birth of Jesus, he says that after all the excitement over Jesus' birth, Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." I'm sure she must have done a lot of "pondering" over the years. When Jesus was lost in Jerusalem and responded so nonchalantly to his parents' concern after they found him, Mary didn't understand. When he left home to begin his ministry, he was always in trouble with the religious leaders, always saying outrageous things,

Daystar Diary

Daystar University College is a liberal arts college in Nairobi, Kenya. Its undergraduate degrees and accreditation are conferred by Messiah College. Messiah College faculty member John Yeatts, with his wife Amy and their two children, are in Nairobi this year, representing Messiah on the Daystar faculty.

Having been in Kenya now for more than a month, I have had some time to think about Daystar's contribution to education on the African continent. I remember a conversation that I had with a Ghanaian student at Messiah. Because he had previously been a student at Daystar, I asked him what to expect. His words were very helpful. One of the things he told me was that I should expect African students to try to convince me to sponsor them to study in the United States. Everyone wants to study in the United States.

A short time later, I was talking with one of my colleagues who had been Messiah's representative to Daystar before me. He said: "I do not think we are doing the African students a favor by sending them to the U.S. to study." He

went on to explain why. He said that it is extremely costly. Furthermore, we tend to educate them in such a way that they are not useful in their own culture.

Both of my colleague's concerns have been illustrated in my experience. I met a student at lunch today who said that he was accepted at a prestigious university in the U.S. but could not go because he did not have the money. The cost he quoted was exorbitant in the Kenyan economy (one million Kenya shillings). Moreover, the cost is not just financial; education in the U.S. is also costly in family relationships. The Ghanaian student I mentioned earlier was separated from his wife and family until they could join him this past December at considerable financial expense.

The second of my colleague's concerns was illustrated several weeks ago, when I received a call from the Nairobi airport. A former Brethren in Christ missionary to Zimbabwe was in transit and wanted to spend some time at Daystar. I transported him and his wife to town, and we talked about the education of African students. He said that he heard recently of a Zimbabwean student who arrived home from education in the U.S. complete with 8 suitcases of luggage, shades, and a loud jam box. He implied that what this student learned in the U.S. about accumulating material things would make the adjustment back into the African culture very difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, a high percentage of Africans educated in the U.S. do not return to their home country.

So, what do I conclude from all this? I conclude that Daystar University College is a much better option for African students than study in the U.S. It is less expensive, and it educates them in their own culture, rather than educating them out of their culture.

I have been told that Daystar University College is the only Christian liberal arts college on the African continent. It is exciting to be a part of this. Messiah College and the Brethren in Christ Church have a part in a ministry here that is valid and crucial.

That reminds me. Soon, I must write about the Brethren in Christ students here at Daystar from Zimbabwe and Zambia. Roy Sider plans to be here at the end of the month. Maybe I can send the next edition of the Diary with him.

John R. Yeatts

having his life threatened, being followed by huge crowds of people, even shutting her out sometimes. This son of hers was different and he made her life different. No neatly packaged life for her. I imagine myself in Mary's place, thinking, "Why can't he be like everyone else? Why *my* son, Lord? I had such plans for him."

And then he died—cruelly, undeservedly, humiliatingly. Mary's firstborn son was hung on a cross to die. She hadn't planned on his birth, and she certainly didn't plan for him to die this way, so young, with so much work yet to do. More pondering, thinking, "Why, Lord?"

But I'm putting words in Mary's mouth. I'm projecting my own feelings onto her situation. I'm reaching out of my need to control what happens in my life, not to have things happen unexpectedly. I want a neat package with no loose ends. I'm not sure I would have responded to the angel the way Mary did—afraid, but open to what the Lord wanted, even if it meant disrupting my entire life.

Lately, I've been inwardly screaming at all the disruptions to my plans, my full schedule, my life. Too much to do and too little time. So many demands, so many choices to make. I don't want the unexpected. But of course the unexpected always happens. Most of the time, however, the unexpected doesn't change the whole course of my life, like it did for Mary. And rarely does the unexpected have such momentous consequences, like the birth of the Messiah. What if it did, though? How would I react?

"May it be to me as you have said," Mary said to the angel. Her life—and the world—was completely changed, and all she said was, "Okay, whatever you say." Could I say that? Could I imagine the serendipity of the unexpected, or am I too busy and too tightly scheduled to recognize the signs of something wonderful? Mary's acceptance of a life which wasn't the neat little package she expected challenges me this Christmas. I'd like to be more open to the possibilities of the unexpected.

"My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name." ■

December 1987

Editorial

Christmas trees and people

Each year as a fund raising project the local Kiwanis Club sells Christmas trees. As a member of this organization I take my turn at manning the lot where the trees are sold.

This is an interesting experience—selling trees and observing people. After I have "stood up" the fourteenth tree for the careful buyer and spun it around to show the fullness and contour I will casually observe that trees are like people—there are no perfect ones.

But too often we expect from people what my careful Christmas tree buyer looks for in a tree—perfection. We may be quick to admit that the perfect person does not exist, yet we act as though we expect it. This has added implications when we come to this from within the Christian perspective. We are better prepared to accept this lack of perfection in one who makes no Christian profession than we do in one who is a Christian.

From within the Christian context we would make two observations:

Growth in grace should do something about imperfections—mine and the other person's. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the study of God's Word, and the fellowship in the family of faith—the church—should add refinement to character and to manners of life and conduct.

The other observation is that God's grace is as essential and should be as effective in enabling us to live with each other in spite of our imperfections as it is in making us more perfect.

Come to think about it, I do not believe that I ever brought home a perfect Christmas tree. But I never recall bringing one home that my family did not think was *beautiful*. They didn't notice the imperfections as they envisioned the lights, the balls, the star on top, and the brightly tied packages beneath.

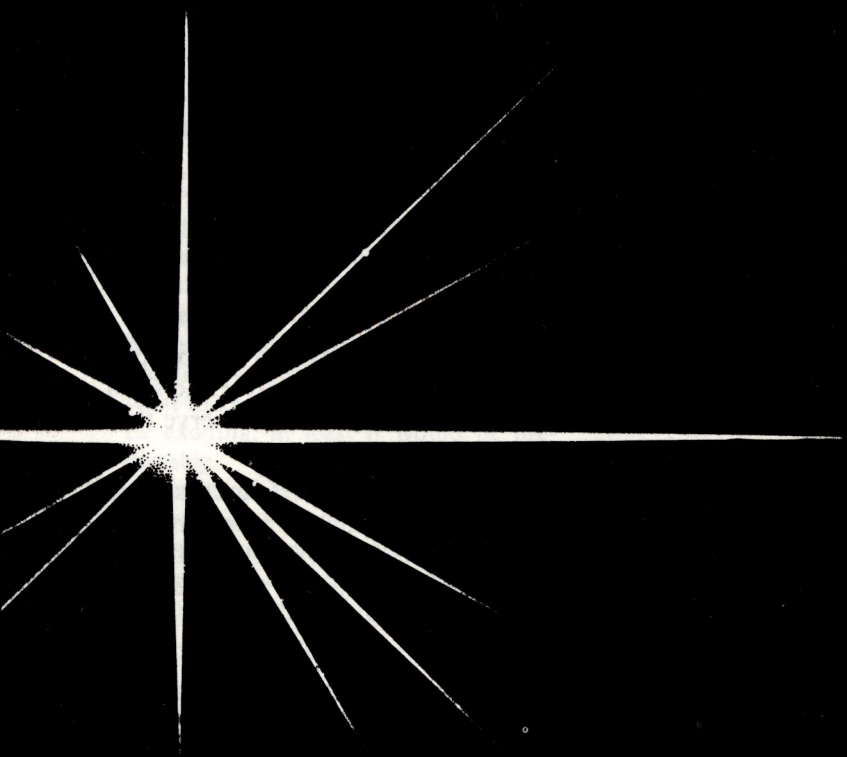
And I recall of reading somewhere that those things that are pure and true and lovely and of good report, are the things we should think about—which does not give us much time to think about the imperfections. In the language of our day, even imperfect people are "beautiful" through eyes of Christian love.

John E. Zercher
December 25, 1971

This centennial year for the *Evangelical Visitor* is at its end. As we begin our second century of ministry to the Brethren in Christ Church, please join with us in prayer that the Lord will be glorified and the church will be enriched through the ministry of this magazine.

And now, from the *Visitor* staff, as well as the employees of Evangel Press and Christian Light Bookstores, our prayer for you: May the peace and joy which comes as the gift of God be present in your life and in the lives of your family and friends this Christmas.

G



Prince of Peace

*That he should come
as Prince of Peace
to pay the price
of our release
confounds and humbles
one whose pride
caused him to cast
such love aside
to claim himself
the royal throne
to make the kingdom
all his own,
disdaining him
of lowly birth,
ignoring him
of priceless worth.
But loving grace
pursued my soul
and wooed me
into his control,
forgiving sins
upon the scroll,
restoring life
and making whole.*

—Ray M. Zercher

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